

"In the latter days, the sun shall rise from the west" • Holy Prophet Muhammad (Peace and blessings of Allah be on him)



TRUE LOVE FOR THE Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}

23 Prophet's
reaction to
blasphemy

26 Prophet's love
and service to
humanity

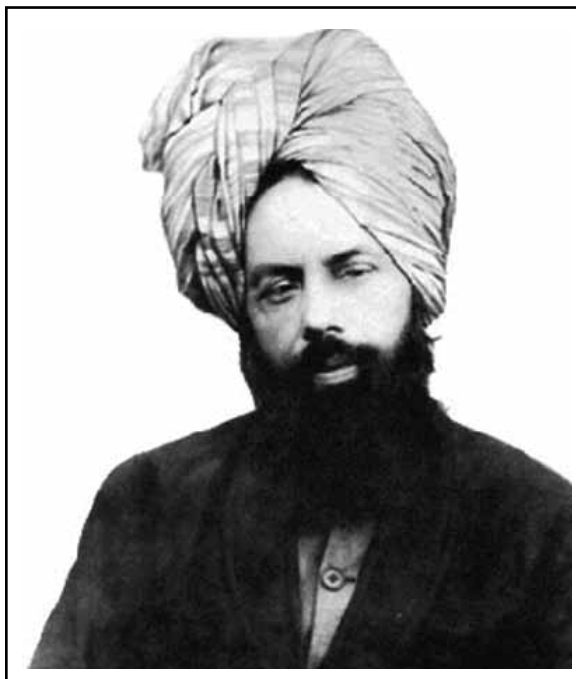
29 To my
friend. The
highest
of the high

33 Prophet's
message of
moderation

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a religious organization, international in its scope, with branches in 195 countries in Africa, North America, South America, Asia, Australasia, and Europe. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was established in 1889 by Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} (1835-1908) in Qadian, a small and remote village in the Punjabi province of India. He claimed to be the expected reformer of the latter days, the Awaited One of the world community of religions (The Mahdi and Messiah). The Movement he started is an embodiment of the benevolent message of Islam – peace, universal brotherhood, and submission to the Will of God – in its pristine purity. Hadhrat Ahmad^{as} proclaimed Islam as the religion of man: “The religion of the people of the right path” (98:6). The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community was created under divine guidance with the objective to rejuvenate Islamic moral and spiritual values. It encourages interfaith dialogue, diligently defends Islam and tries to correct misunderstandings about Islam in the West. It advocates peace, tolerance, love and understanding among followers of different faiths. It firmly believes in and acts upon the Qur’anic teaching: “There is no compulsion in religion” (2:257). It strongly rejects violence and terrorism in any form and for any reason.

After the passing of its founder, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community has been headed by his elected successors. The present Head of the Community, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, was elected in 2003. His official title is Khalifatul Masih V or Fifth Successor of the Promised Messiah..



Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908)

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Muslims follow the name of God's prophets with the prayer *alaehis salaam* or 'may peace be upon him,' and for the Holy Prophet Muhammad, *sallallahu alaehi wasallam* or 'may peace and blessings of God be upon him.' Companions of prophets and righteous personalities who have passed away are saluted by *radhi-Allaho anhu/a* or 'may Allah be pleased with him/her.' While such salutations sometimes are not set out in the text for readability, we encourage readers to offer these prayers as if set out in full.

Dr. Mufti Muhammad Sadiq (1872-1957) was the first Ahmadiyya Muslim missionary to arrive in America. In 1921, he founded the *Muslim Sunrise*, which stands today as the longest running Muslim publication in America. The magazine seeks to open discussions on Islam and topics relating to religion in general. It highlights the role of Islam in an ever changing global society. It provides a platform for public opinion on contemporary issues and presenting their solutions from an Islamic perspective.

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AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM COMMUNITY

United States of America

*Muslims who believe in the Messiah,
Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, Qadian^{AS}*

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

From the Holy Qur'an

Muhammad Chapter 47 : Verse 3

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا الصَّالِحَاتِ وَآمَنُوا
بِمَا نُزِّلَ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَهُوَ الْحَقُّ مِنْ
رَبِّهِمْ ۚ كَفَّرَ عَنْهُمْ سَيِّئَاتِهِمْ وَأَصْلَحَ
بَالَهُمْ ③

*But as for those who believe
and do good works and believe
in that which has been revealed
to Muhammad — and it is the
truth from their Lord — He
removes from them their sins and
improves their condition.*

In the Words of the Promised Messiah^{as}

If it is asked that if the Messiah and I have attained to this rank then what rank is left for our lord and master, the best of the messengers, Khatam-ul-Anbiya', Muhammad, the chosen one^{sa}, the answer is that it is a high and exalted rank which is special to him, the appreciation of which is not possible for anyone else, let alone that any one else should be able to achieve it....

The degrees of nearness to God and love of God from the point of view of spiritual rank are of three types. The lowest degree, and even that is very high, is that the fire of Divine love should warm the heart possibly to such a degree that the warmed heart might acquire the qualities of fire, but that it should lack the brightness of the fire. When the flame of God's love falls upon this degree of love, the warmth generated by that flame in the soul is described as contentment and satisfaction and is sometimes named an angel.

The second degree of love is where the fire of Divine love, which is generated by the union of two loves, warms the heart to such a degree that it produces a brightness which is not inflammatory. It is described as Ruh-ul-Qudus—the Holy Spirit.



The Promised Messiah and Imam Mahdi

*"Alaysa Allaho be-Kafen Abdahoo"
Is not God sufficient for His servant?*

The third degree of love is where a burning flame of Divine love falls on the eager ribbon of human love and sets it afire and, assuming control of all its particles, makes it a complete and perfect manifestation of itself. In this condition the fire of Divine love not only bestows a brightness upon the human heart, but simultaneously the whole being is set on fire and its flames illumine the surroundings like the bright day, and no darkness is left and the whole of the being is converted into fire with all its full qualities. This condition which is created by the union of the two loves like a flaming fire is known as Ruh-ul-Amin, the Spirit of Security, for it bestows security against every darkness and is free from every opaqueness. It is also called the strong faculty, for it is the most powerful revelation, stronger than which cannot be imagined. It is also

called the high horizon, inasmuch as it is the manifestation of the highest form of revelation. It is also described as: He saw what he saw; for an appreciation of this condition is beyond the imagination or thinking of the whole of creation.

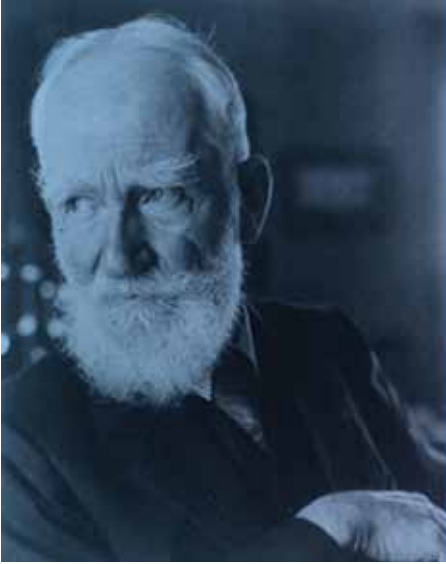
This condition has been bestowed upon only one human being who is the perfect man with whom the whole human system has come to an end and the circle of human capacities has been perfected. In truth, he is the highest point of the extended line of God's creation which is the ultimate of all grades of exaltation.

Divine Wisdom having started the creation from the lowest point carried it to this highest point, the name of which is Muhammad^{sa} and the meaning of which is greatly praised, that is to say, the manifestation of perfect excellences. As by his nature the station of this Prophet^{sa} was at the highest, so externally also he was bestowed revelation and love at the highest level.

This is the high station which neither Jesus nor I can reach; its name is the station of getting together and the station of perfect Unity. The previous prophets who have prophesied the advent of the Holy Prophet^{sa} have mentioned this station. As the station of Jesus and myself is such, that metaphorically it can be described as sonship, in the same way, the station of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is so grand that past prophets have metaphorically described the appearance of the Holy Prophet^{sa} as the appearance of God Almighty and his coming has been described as the coming of God Almighty.

[*Taudih-e-Maram, Ruhani Khaza'in*, Vol. 3, pp. 62-64]. Taken from *Essence of Islam* Vol 1, pages 223-225, for full text go to Alislam.org

Editorial



"I have always held the religion of Muhammad in high estimation because of its wonderful vitality. It is the only religion which appears to me to possess that assimilating capacity to the changing phase of existence which can make itself appeal to every age. I have studied him - the wonderful man - and in my opinion far from being an anti-Christ, he must be called the Savior of Humanity."

George Bernard Shaw

There are two parts of the Islamic creed: There is no one worthy of worship except Allah and Muhammad is His messenger.

Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} established the first part of the creed (*Kalima*) in his lifetime. He established the unity of God in such a manner that not only in Arabia but throughout the world the oneness of God started to take hold. This fact is so clear that even the traditionally idol worshipping religions such as Hinduism have started to define their deities within the concept of one God. This credit does not go to any other prophet but to Muhammad^{sa} who single-handedly accomplished it without any outside help or assistance.

The second part of the Islamic creed: Muhammad^{sa} is His messenger still needed to be established in the world. That work was destined for the Promised Messiah^{as} to be sent

in the latter days and his community. He was to show the real beauty and truly magnificent picture of this great prophet of God which was hidden from most of the world. That is the reason why the main qualification for the appointment of the Promised Messiah was his intensity of love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. That is what has been described by Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} who claimed to be the Promised Messiah for the latter days.

The significant part of being the messenger of God is that Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} is a human being but achieved the highest spiritual status in the Eyes of God that was ever possible for a human being. The divine qualities of forgiveness, kindness, generosity, helpfulness, love for the whole of mankind was evident at the near perfect level beyond which human beings cannot reach. The creation of Muhammad^{sa} was the pinnacle of God's creating the human beings

throughout the ages just as an artist creates his masterpiece which becomes the essence of all of his artwork. Muhammad^{sa} is the masterpiece of the creation of human beings by God.

It is only a matter of time, in accordance with the prophecies of the Holy Qur'an and other traditions of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} that the day will come when even the West will recognize, appreciate and adopt the wonderful personality and example of this great prophet of God. The sun shall rise from the West. This is the focus and objective of the community and followers of the Promised Messiah^{as}.

In the current issue, we present some aspects of the character of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. This will provide a glimpse of his beauty and nearness to God's attributes. Hopefully, this will inspire readers to further study his life and teachings and his living personal example as a perfect model for everyone to aspire to.

Friday Sermon,
September 21, 2012

True Love For the Holy Prophet^{sa}

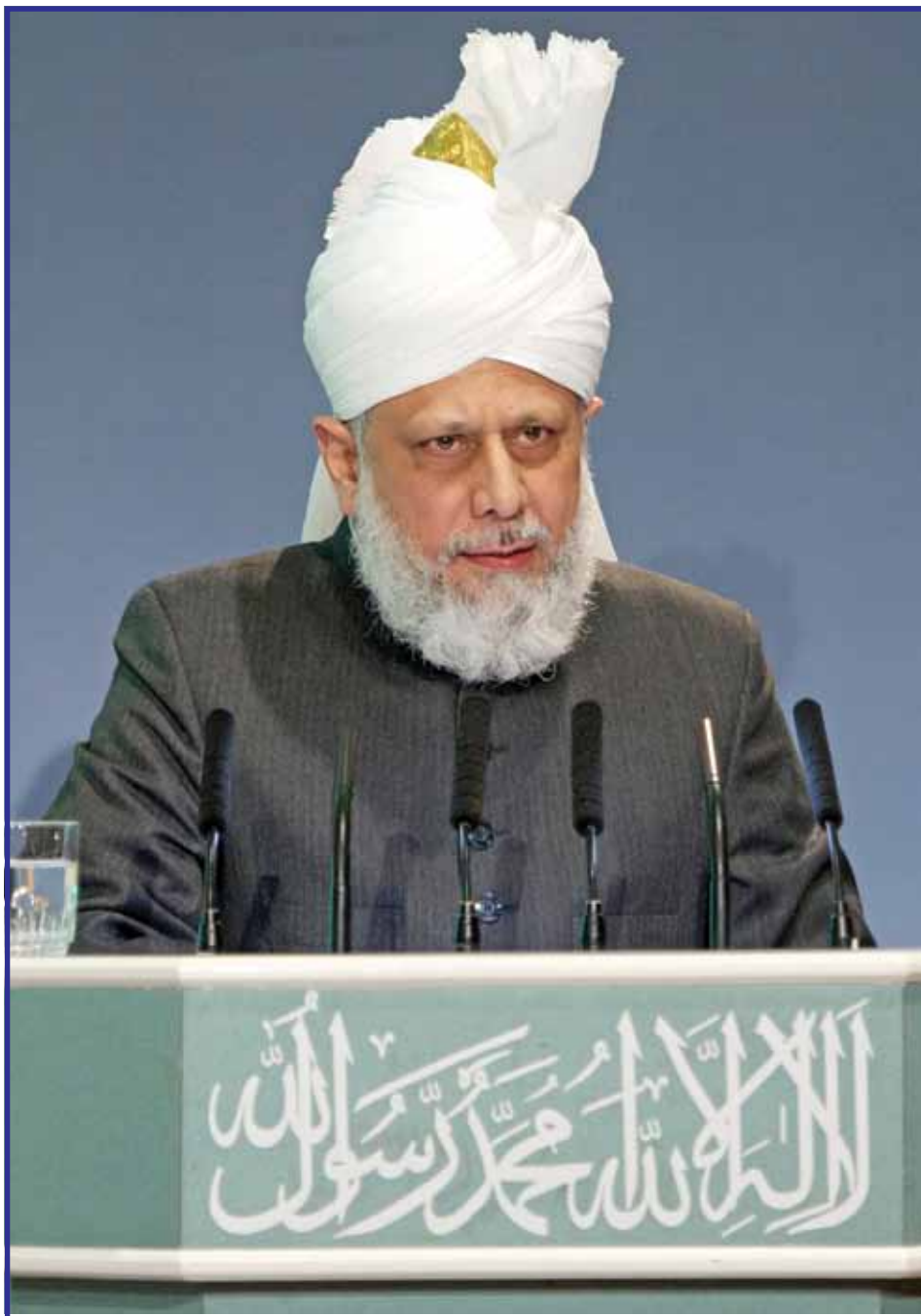
Delivered by Hazrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Khalifatul Masih V, Head of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, from the Baitul Futuh Mosque, London, UK.)

After reciting Tashahhud, Taawwuz and Surah) Al-Fatihah, His Holiness read out verses 57-58 of Surah Al-Ahzab (chapter 33 of the Holy Quran) and said:

“Allah and His Angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe! You also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace. Verily, those who annoy Allah and His messenger – Allah has cursed them in this world and in the Hereafter, and has prepared for them an abasing punishment.”

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was the *Muhsin-e-Insaaniyyat* (Benefactor of Mankind), the *Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen* (Mercy for all Mankind) and the Beloved of God who would stay awake all night in deep anguish that humanity be saved from ruin. He would express such agony and sorrow to alleviate the pains of mankind that the God of the Heavens, addressing the Holy Prophet^{sa}, stated that would he grieve himself to death in sorrow for those who did not believe in the Creator?

The slanderous and vulgar film against the Benefactor of Mankind would most certainly cause the hearts of Muslims to bleed, and indeed this is what happened. More than anyone else, Ahmadi Muslims are hurt, for we are the followers of the True and Ardent Devotee of the Holy Prophet^{sa} [that is the Promised



His Holiness Mirza Masroor Ahmad

Khalifatul Masih V, the global leader of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. He is the fifth successor and great grandson of the Promised Messiah and Reformer, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian. His Holiness is the world's leading Muslim figure promoting peace and inter-religious harmony.

Messiah, Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as}] who provided us with true understanding of the exalted station of the Master Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Thus, we are torn at this gross act. Our hearts have been ripped apart. We prostrate before God the Exalted and pray that may He take revenge from these wrongdoers. May they become a sign of admonishment that will remain a lesson until the end of time. The Imam of this age has provided us with discernment of true affection and devotion towards the Holy Prophet^{sa}, explaining that we can reconcile with the serpents and wild beasts, but we cannot, however, ever reconcile with those who stubbornly persist in insulting the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, our Master and Guide, the Seal of all the Prophets. The Promised Messiah^{as} wrote:

"Muslims are those people who give their lives for the honour of their noble Prophet^{sa}. Death is their preference to the dishonour of genuinely reconciling with such people and becoming their friends, whose task is to day and night verbally abuse their Holy Prophet^{sa} and cite his name extremely insultingly in their magazines, books and advertisements and mention him in utterly degrading words."

The Promised Messiah^{as} says:

"Remember, such individuals are not the well-wishers of their own nation as they create impediments in their path. I say most truthfully that it is possible for us to reconcile with wild snakes and wilderness beasts but we cannot reconcile with such people who do not desist from insulting the honour of God's holy prophets. They believe that there is triumph in abusive language and vulgarity but each triumph comes from the Heavens".

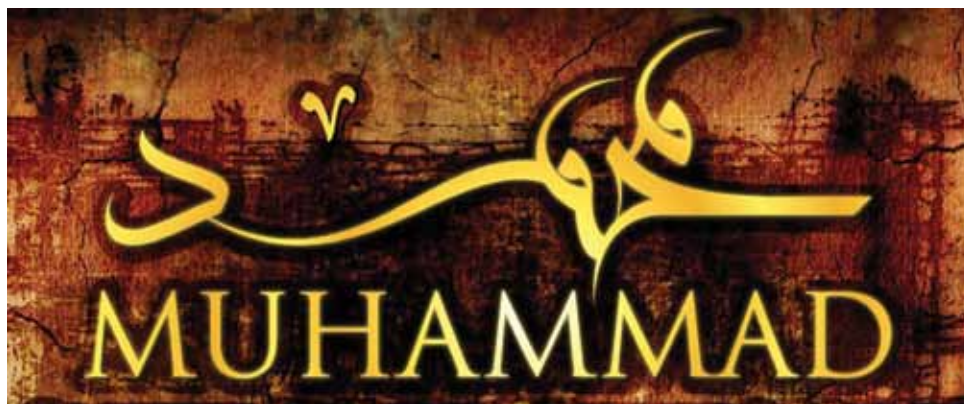
He says further:

*"Through the blessing of their pure discourse, those with pure speech ultimately win hearts and minds, whereas those of wicked nature have no skill other than creating discord and conflict in the land in a disorderly way...experience also bears witness that such offensive people meet a sorry end. The sense of honour of God ultimately comes to pass for His beloved ones."*¹

In the current era, in addition to newspapers and pamphlets etcetera, other forms of media are also being used for such vulgarity.

Hence those who stubbornly persist in their transgression and in trying to contend with God will be seized by His wrath, God willing.

In 2006, when some malicious people in Denmark drew vulgar caricatures of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, I drew the Ahmadiyya community's attention to giving an appropriate response. I also told them that such wicked people existed before and they would not stop there. The protests by the Muslims would have no impact



and they would continue acting in this manner. Thus we observe that their actions have become more vulgar and unjust than before. Since then, their behaviour in this regard has continuously worsened. This is their downfall and defeat by Islam, which is compelling them to being offensive and slanderous in the name of freedom of conscience. As the Promised Messiah^{as} stated that remember, these people are not the well-wishers of even their own nations. One day their wrong approach will clearly unfold upon them. The vulgarities and obscenities they perpetrate today will in fact harm their own nations, for such people are selfish and unjust. Apart from merely fulfilling their own desires, they are not interested in anything else.

Currently, in the name of freedom of speech, both politicians and others, openly in some places and mostly indirectly, are speaking in their favour. Occasionally some are speaking up for the Muslims as well. However remember that this world has now become a global village. As such, these matters can destroy the peace of these countries if wickedness is not openly declared as wickedness, and this is separate to God's wrath that will come to pass. Remember the saying of the Imam of the age; that all victories come from the heavens and it has been decreed in the heavens that the Messenger whom you are trying to insult will prevail over the world. As the Promised Messiah^{as} stated, he will prevail

by winning over the hearts, because pure discourses have an impact. Pure discourses do not require extremist measures to be taken nor do they require that vulgarity should be responded to with vulgarity. The despicable behaviour and use of foul language has been instigated by these people and will, God willing, quickly come to an end. God will also deal with these perpetrators in the Hereafter.

In the verses that I recited from the

Holy Qur'an, God the Almighty has also drawn the attention of the believers towards their responsibilities; that it is their duty to invoke *Durood* and *Salaam* (salutations and peace) upon the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Vulgarities, maliciousness and mockery do not in the least affect the honour and dignity of the Proph-

et^{sa} in any way, shape or form. He is such a great Prophet^{sa} upon whom even God and His angels send *Durood*. It is thus the duty of believers to constantly engage in *Durood* (invoking blessings and salutations) upon the Holy Prophet^{sa}. When the enemy exceeds in vulgar acts, then they should invoke *Durood* upon the Holy Prophet^{sa} more than before.

"Bless O Allah, Muhammad and the people of Muhammad, as You did bless Abraham and the people of Abraham; You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious! Prosper, O Allah, Muhammad and the people of Muhammad, as You did prosper Abraham, and the people of Abraham; You are indeed the Praiseworthy, the Glorious!"

Thus this alone is the *Durood* (invocation of salutations and blessings) and this alone is the Prophet^{sa} for whom triumph in the world is destined. While an Ahmadi Muslim expresses abhorrence, deep grief and anger at these vulgar acts, he or she also tries to draw the attention of the wrongdoers themselves to desisting from these acts and those in authority towards stopping them. From a worldly perspective, an Ahmadi tries to make a personal effort to inform the world of the reality as opposed to this conspiracy, and presents the beautiful aspects of the blessed model of the Holy Prophet^{sa}. An Ahmadi tries to demonstrate the blessed example of the Holy Prophet^{sa} through his or her every act, and thus illustrate to the world its true image in practice. Indeed men,

women, young, old and children, more than ever, should give greater attention towards *Durood* and *Salaam* (invoking salutations and peace upon the Holy Prophet^{sa}) and must fill their surrounding atmosphere with it. Everyone should make their actions a practical model of Islamic teachings. This is the beautiful response we should give.

As far as the consequences of the wrongdoers is concerned, Allah has explained in the second verse [recited at the outset], that those who hurt the Messenger or who wound the hearts of the believers of this age by slandering the Messenger, will be dealt with by Allah Himself. These are the people who have been cursed by Allah the Exalted in this life, and due to this curse they will continue sinking further in filth and indecency. For such people Allah has decreed a humiliating chastisement after death. The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained this subject pertaining to the end of those people who use vulgar language, that they will certainly reach their sorry end. In this life they will reach their fate in the form of God's curse, and in the hereafter it shall be in the shape of the abasing punishment of Allah. Other Muslims also, in accordance with the commands and teachings of Allah the Exalted, should react by filling their countries, their regions and their atmosphere with *Durood* (salutations and blessings) upon the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. This is how Muslims should react. It is futile to react by burning or setting fire to properties and possessions in their own countries or by killing their fellow countrymen or that the police are compelled to fire at their own citizens as protestors are killed.

Through media and newspaper reports it has emerged that often the sincere people of the West, both in the USA and here, have expressed disgust and displeasure upon this crude act. However, on the one hand the leadership declares this to be wrong, but on the other hand, it backs it in the name of freedom of expression and freedom of speech. These double standards cannot continue. The law regarding freedom of speech is not a Divine scripture. Thus, as I also said in my address to politicians in the US, man-made laws are prone to errors and flaws. Certain aspects whilst legislating can be overlooked because man does not possess knowledge of the unseen, whereas God the Almighty is the Knower of the Unseen. Laws made by God are flawless. Do not consider, therefore, your man-made laws to be perfect and that there can be no alterations and changes made to

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained this subject pertaining to the end of those people who use vulgar language, that they will certainly reach their sorry end. In this life they will reach their fate in the form of God's curse, and in the hereafter it shall be in the shape of the abasing punishment of Allah.

them. While a law for freedom of speech exists, neither in any country nor in the UN Charter do we find a law that states that no person will be allowed the freedom to hurt the religious sentiments of others or insult the holy personages of other religions. This is not written in the law anywhere and it is because of this that the peace of the world is being destroyed. This causes the lava of hatred to erupt and the gulf between countries and religions to increasingly widen. While a law for freedom of speech has been made giving an individual freedom, which is fine, there should not be a law permitting playing with others sentiments. This is exactly why the UN is failing. It considers the formation of this futile law a huge accomplishment.

However, look at God's law. The law of God the Exalted states that do not even mock the idols of other people lest they in retaliation do the same to your All-Powerful God in ignorance by using disparaging words, which would make your hearts grieve, increase enmity, and lead to clashes, quarrels and disorder to break out in the country. Therefore, this is the beautiful teaching imparted by the God of Islam, the God of this world and the God of this universe. That God has given us this teaching Who sent His Beloved One, the Holy Prophet^{sa}, with the perfect law and teaching for the reformation of mankind and to establish love and compassion. He conferred upon him the title of *Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen* (Mercy for all Mankind) and thus sent the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} as the

Mercy for all peoples. Hence the educated people of the world, the politicians and those in power should ponder, that by not firmly dealing with these few despicable people are they too a party to this disorder? The people of the world at large also should think; that by playing with the religious sentiments of others and by agreeing with these few revolting creatures, are they also playing a part in destroying world peace?

We, who are Ahmadi Muslims, do not leave any stone unturned to serve humanity. In the US, there was a need to give blood and so last year Ahmadi Muslims helped to collect 12,000 bottles of blood and they are currently carrying out a similar blood drive this year. I said to them that we Ahmadi Muslims are donating our blood to give life, whilst you make our hearts bleed through such despicable acts and by agreeing with those who committed them. Thus, this is the response of an Ahmadi—a true Muslim. On the other side this is the response of a certain segment who think that they are establishing justice. They allege that Muslims are acting wrongly. It is correct that some of the Muslim reaction is wrong; damage and destruction, setting things on fire, killing of the innocent, leaving diplomats unprotected or killing or murdering diplomats are all entirely incorrect. However, derision and insult of the innocent prophets of God is also a huge sin. Following suit, recently a French magazine has published offensive caricatures which are even worse than the previous ones. These worldly people consider the world to be

everything not realising that this world alone is the source of their destruction.

Here I would like to state that the Muslim governments rule over much of the world. Allah the Almighty has given natural resources to many Muslim countries. Muslim countries are also a part of the United Nations. They read and believe in the Holy Qur'an, which provides the perfect and complete code of conduct for every aspect of life. Why then have the Muslim governments not made an effort to impart to the world the beautiful teachings of the Holy Qur'an at every level? Why do they not present to the world that according to the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, playing with the religious sentiments of others or to try to dishonor the prophets of God is a major crime and major sin? Why do they not act in this manner? It is necessary for world peace that this is made a part of the UN peace charter so that no member country would allow any of its citizens to play with the religious sentiments of others and so that world peace is not allowed to be destroyed in the name of freedom of speech. Sadly however, all of this has been happening for so long. The Muslim countries have never made a combined and concerted effort to inform the world about the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and all the other prophets and they have never had this acknowledged at an international level. Although like other charters of the United Nations, this will similarly not be implemented, as which peace charter of the UN is being properly implemented at present? At the very least however, something would go on record.

The OIC (Organisation of Islamic Countries) is established but it has never made rigorous efforts to try and establish the honour and dignity of Muslims in the world. Instead the Muslim leaders are busy pursuing their vested interests. They are not concerned about the splendour of the faith. If our Muslim leaders had made robust efforts then the public would not react inappropriately, as is currently occurring in Pakistan and in other countries, for they would be satisfied in the knowledge that their leaders, who have been appointed for this task, would strive to fulfil the right that for upholding the honour of the Holy Prophet^{sa} and to uphold the honour of all the prophets, they would rise up on the world forum in a way that the world would have to accept that they are right.

There are a large number of Muslims living in the West and in every part of the world. Muslims are the second greatest power of the

world in terms of population and religion. Were they to abide by the commandments of Allah the Almighty they could become the greatest force in every sense. In such an instance, the anti-Islamic forces would never even dare contemplating or perpetrating such heart-rending acts. Apart from the Muslim countries, a large number of Muslims live in every country of the world. In Europe, the number of Turks alone runs into millions. In fact, there are millions of them, living in every European country.

Similarly, other Muslim ethnic groups have come from Asia to the UK, to the US, to Canada and to every part of Europe. If they all decided that they would vote for those politicians who not only expressed religious tolerance verbally, but also demonstrated it practically, and who condemned people who perpetrated such vulgarities and made such films, then even from among these worldly governments a segment would rise up to denounce this indecency. Thus, if Muslims understood their importance they could bring about a revolution in the world. They could facilitate laws pertaining to respecting religious sentiments within countries. However it is unfortunate that they are unmindful of this. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is focused on this, yet Muslims are busy opposing it, and are instead strengthening the hand of the detractors. May Allah the Almighty grant sense and wisdom to Muslim leaders, politicians and religious scholars so that they may strengthen themselves, recognise their importance and give heed to Islamic teachings.

The moral degradation of those who raised obscene allegations against the Holy Prophet^{sa} and produced or worked for this film can be assessed from media reports regarding them. The main person behind the film is said to be a Coptic Christian living in the US by the name of Nakoula Basseley Nakoula—or is referred to “Sam Bacile” or something or the other—who is reported to have a criminal background and served time in jail in 2010 for fraud. The person who directed the film is a director of pornographic films and all the actors who featured in the film are actors of pornographic films. The excesses of pornography are beyond envisagement. So this is the level of their morality. This is how low they have stooped in filth and indecency, yet they purport to criticise that person whose high morals and purity even God testified to. By committing this obscene act they surely continue to invite the wrath of God. The sponsors and supporters of this film also cannot avoid

God's Punishment, amongst whom is also a Christian priest who time and again for cheap publicity in the US has attempted to burn the Holy Qur'an.

“Our Lord, shatter them into pieces, a complete breaking up and reduce them to dust.”

Some sections of the media have condemned this film and have also condemned the reaction of the Muslims. Inappropriate reactions should indeed be condemned, but it should also be noted who instigated this. As I said earlier, it is the misfortune of Muslims that this has happened because Muslims have no unity and no leadership. Despite claiming to have ardent love and affection for the Holy Prophet^{sa}, they are distant from their faith. They may claim to be strong in faith, but they have no knowledge of religion and are also continuously weakening in a worldly sense.

No Muslim country has strongly protested to any other country in this regard. Where protests have been made they have been so weak that the media took no notice. The news item which has been given regarding the protests and objections of the Muslims was that 1.8 billion Muslims were reacting in a childish manner. As there is no one at the helm and they are scattered and walking lost, the reaction would then be childish. This was a cynical comment, but it also exposed the reality. May God enable the Muslims to at least now show some embarrassment and shame. The other people are spiritually blind and know nothing about the status of the prophets. They remain silent even when the rank of Prophet Hazrat Isa^{as} (Jesus) is slighted. They would consider therefore, the passion of the Muslims towards the Holy Prophet^{sa} as childish.

As I stated earlier, in 2006 I also drew attention towards forming a robust plan of action so that in future no one would even dare to insult in this way, but if only Muslims paid heed to this. Every single Ahmadi should also make efforts to convey this message. By [Muslims] merely protesting for a short while and then keeping silent the problem will not be resolved. One suggestion was presented (often people present various suggestions) that all of the Muslim lawyers of the world should join together and form a petition. If only Muslim lawyers with international standing deliberated upon the feasibility of this, or would come up with another option.

For how long will you continue observing such vulgar and obscene acts? For how long will you go on protesting and causing damage

and destruction, only to fall silent thereafter? This will have no effect upon the Western world or on the producers of the film. It is completely contrary to the teachings of Islam to attack innocent people in Western countries, to threaten them or to attempt to kill them and attack their embassies. Islam does not permit this in any way, shape or form. By acting in this way you will be giving an opportunity for objections to be raised against the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Thus, extremism is not the answer. The answer is, as I have explained before; to reform one's practice, to invoke *Du-ood and Salaam* (salutations and peace) upon the Holy Prophet^{sa}, who is the means of salvation for mankind. It is by the Muslims uniting together and it is by Muslims living in the West gaining strength by their vote. Members of the Ahmadiyya Jama'at must work in this manner wherever they are. They should also strive to convince their non-Ahmadi acquaintances to tread on this path; that they should build their strength in such countries through the power of voting. Present the beautiful aspects of the blessed life of the Holy Prophet^{sa} to the world.

Today the world clamours over freedom of speech. They allege that it is non-existent in Islam citing examples of the present day Muslim countries where citizens do not have freedom of speech. If this is the case in Muslim countries it has no link whatsoever with Islam and it is their misfortune that they are not implementing the Islamic teachings. In history there are examples of people addressing the Holy Prophet^{sa} very rudely and without any etiquette or respect whatsoever. Despite this the Holy Prophet^{sa} displayed such forbearance and tolerance, the like of which is not found anywhere in the world. I shall present a few examples of such accounts, which although are normally presented relating to the munificence and generosity of the Holy Prophet^{sa}, but they also demonstrate his fearlessness, resolve and forbearance.

Hazrat Jubair bin Mut'am^{ra} has related that once he was with the Holy Prophet^{sa} and some other people were also with him. The Prophet^{sa} was returning from Hunain. The Bedouins surrounded the Prophet^{sa} making such persistent demands to him that he was

forced to move towards a thorny tree, where his cloak became stuck in its thorns. The Holy Prophet^{sa} stopped and said, "Return my cloak. If I had as many camels as the wild trees I would have given them to you and thus you would not have found me niggardly, false or a coward."²

In another tradition, Hazrat Anas^{ra} relates: "Once I was in the company of the Holy Prophet^{sa} who was wearing a cloak with thick edges. A Bedouin pulled his cloak so hard

Today, natural disasters are prevalent and there is destruction all around. Storms and hurricanes are occurring in the US at a greater frequency than before. The economic crisis is worsening. Various inhabitations of the world are at a threat of being submerged by water due to global warming. The world is thus engulfed in perils and dangers. These excesses should draw the attention of such people towards God, rather than towards obscenities.

that the edges left a mark on his neck. He then said, 'O Muhammad^{sa}! From amongst the wealth that Allah the Almighty has given you, load some of it upon these two camels of mine, because neither will you give out of your wealth nor from the wealth of your father. Initially the Holy Prophet^{sa} kept quiet. He then stated that, 'Wealth is God's and I am God's servant.' Then the Prophet^{sa} said, "Revenge will be extracted for the pain you have caused me." That Bedouin said, "No". The Prophet^{sa} said, "Why will revenge not be taken?" The Bedouin replied, "Because you do not respond to badness with badness." The Holy Prophet^{sa} laughed. He then instructed for barley to be loaded on one of the Bedouin's camels, and dates on the other."³

This, therefore, is that highest station of tolerance and patience of Holy Prophet^{sa}. He did not display this only to his followers, but even to his enemies. His high moral standards encompass munificence, compassion, patience, forbearance and also a demonstration of vast tolerance. Yet the ignorant detractors, without thought or

consideration, come forth and allege that the *Rahmatul-Lil-Aalameen* (Mercy for all Mankind), the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, was severe, was harsh and so on.

Objections have also been raised against the Holy Qur'an in the film. I have not seen the film myself, but have heard from people regarding it. It alleges that the Qur'an was written by the cousin of Hazrat Khadijah^{ra}, Waraqah bin Naufal, who Hazrat Khadijah^{ra} took the Prophet^{sa} to after he received his first revelation. During the life of the Prophet^{sa}, the *Kuffaar* (disbelievers) would constantly raise the allegation as to why the Qur'an was being revealed to him part by part, rather than all at once. Such pitiable people are completely devoid of knowledge and true historical facts. Those Christians who consider themselves knowledgeable in this area are actually completely ignorant. Waraqah bin Naufal actually said, "I wish to be alive when your people will turn you out of your nation." Indeed, a short while after this he passed away.⁴ Such Christian priests, as I stated, are completely uninformed of true historical facts. Orientalists have always engaged in the debate regard-

ing the location of where *Surahs* (chapters of the Qur'an) were revealed, whether in Makkah or Madinah. Yet they also believe that Waraqah wrote the Holy Qur'an. The Holy Qur'an has given the challenge itself that if they believe that it was written by someone else, then produce a chapter like it.

With respect to taking care of the sentiments of others, the Holy Prophet^{sa} was peerless also. Even though the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} is greater than all other prophets, yet in consideration of the sentiments of a Jew he once said, "Do not give me superiority over Moses^{as}."⁵

There is the Prophet's care for the sentiments of the poor and respect for their status. Once, for example, a very wealthy Companion expressed his superiority over others. The Holy Prophet^{sa} heard this and stated:

"Do you believe your strength, your power, your wealth and your possessions were all acquired through your own efforts? Absolutely not! Your tribal strength as well as the power of your wealth were all acquired due to the poor."⁶

Today the claimants of freedom establish the rights of the poor and endeavour to safeguard them. Yet 1400 years ago the Holy Prophet^{sa} established these rights when he said that the labourer should be paid his wages before his perspiration dries off.⁷ Thus, where can they possibly contend with the Benefactor of Mankind? There are countless accounts of the Prophet^{sa}. Take any aspect of his life and in every respect you will find the highest moral example established by the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

Another allegation raised is that the Holy Prophet^{sa} was a womaniser, and objections are raised against his marriages. Allah the Almighty knew, however, that such allegations and questions would be raised in the future and so facilitated such incidents which provide the rebuttal to these allegations. It is said regarding Asmaa bint Nu'maan bin Abi Joan that she was amongst the most beautiful women of the Arabs. When she came to Madinah her beauty was praised by every woman who saw her. They would say that they had never seen such a beautiful woman in their lives. On the wish of her father her *Nikah* (Islamic official marriage pronouncement) was solemnised with the Prophet^{sa} for a dowry of 500 Dirhams. When the Holy Prophet^{sa} went to her she said, "I seek God's refuge from you." The Holy Prophet^{sa} replied, "You have sought the refuge of a Great Sanctuary" and then left. He then said to one of his Companions, Abu Usaid, to take her back to her family. It has been recorded in history that her family were extremely happy that their daughter was being married to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. When she returned however, they were extremely upset.⁸ Thus, this was that great person about whom dreadful allegations are made, that he was a womaniser; whilst he married according to God's command.

The Promised Messiah^{as} has explained that:

"If the Holy Prophet^{sa} had not wives and children, and had not faced the relating trials and tribulations which he expressed and passed through, and had not treated his wives most kindly, then how else would we learn about his exemplary model in this regard? Every act of the Prophet was for the sake of the pleasure of God."⁹

An erroneous allegation regarding Hazrat Aa'ishah^{ra} being treated more fondly and also regarding her age is also raised. The Holy Prophet^{sa} would say to Hazrat Aa'ishah^{ra} on certain nights that, "I wish to worship my God

all night, Who is the most beloved to me."¹⁰ Hence people with perverted minds will indeed raise such allegations; as they have done in the past and they may perhaps continue to do so in the future. As I have stated earlier, Allah the Almighty has already decreed that He will fill Hell with such people. They and their supporters should be fearful of the chastisement of God. As the Promised Messiah^{as} has stated, "Allah the Almighty has great honour for His beloved ones."¹¹ In this age He has sent His Messiah and Mahdi and He has drawn the attention of the world towards reformation. If they do not desist from their wrongdoing and mockery then the wrath of God is also severe.

Today, natural disasters are prevalent and there is destruction all around. Storms and hurricanes are occurring in the US at a greater frequency than before. The economic crisis is worsening. Various inhabitations of the world are at a threat of being submerged by water due to global warming. The world is thus engulfed in perils and dangers. These excesses should draw the attention of such people towards God, rather than towards obscenities. Unfortunately, the opposite is occurring. They are trying to transgress beyond all limits. The Imam of this time has already warned everyone openly. He has said clearly that if the world does not take heed and listen, then every step they take will lead them towards destruction. The message of the Promised Messiah^{as} is a message that should be repeated again and again. This is oft repeated and presented and I will present it here again today.

He said:

"Remember that God has informed me about the coming of earthquakes. So remember surely that in accordance with the prophecy, earthquakes came in America and also in Europe. They will also occur in different parts of Asia. Some of them will be as terrifying as doomsday. There will be death on such a large scale that rivers will run with blood. Even birds and animals will not escape it. Such destruction will overtake the Earth as has not happened since man was born. Most places will be turned upside down as if they had never been inhabited. There will also be other terrible afflictions both in the Heaven and in the Earth and every sensible person will realise that they are no ordinary phenomena and no trace of them will be found in books of astronomy or philosophy.

Then people will be seized by anxiety and will wonder what is going to happen. Many will be saved and many will perish. Those days are near. Indeed they are at the doorstep, that the world shall witness a spectacle of doomsday. Not only will there be earthquakes but other terrible calamities will also appear; some from the heaven and some from the Earth. This will happen because men have given up the worship of their God and all their thoughts and their designs and all their resolves are diverted towards this world. Had I not come, these calamities might have been delayed for a while but with my coming, the secret designs of God's wrath that had been long hidden have been manifested. As God Almighty said, We never punish until We have sent a Messenger. Those who repent shall find security and those who fear before the calamity overtakes them will be shown mercy. Do you think that you will be saved from the earthquakes? Or that you can save yourselves by your own designs. No, you cannot. All human designs will come to nought that day. Do not imagine that only America has been shaken by the earthquake and that you are safe for you may experience even greater calamities. O Europe, you are not secure! O Asia, you are not secure! O you who dwell in the islands, no artificial God will come to your aid. I see the cities falling and I see the habitations in ruin. The One and the Unique has long remained silent. Abominations were committed before His eyes and yet He remained silent, but now He shall reveal His Countenance in a dreadful manner. He, who has ears to hear, let him hear. The hour is not far. I try to bring everyone under the security of God but the decrees of destiny had to be fulfilled. Assuredly, I say that this country's turn is also drawing near. The days of Noah shall appear before your eyes and you will see with your own eyes what happened to the land of Lot. But God is slow to wrath. Repent so that you are shown mercy. He who abandons God is a worm, not a man and he who does not fear Him is dead not alive."¹³

May Allah the Almighty grant wisdom to the world and enable them to desist from their wrong and unjust ways. May He also enable us to fulfil our responsibilities. ♦

Impact of the Prophet's life on a Muslim's daily lifestyle

By Mubasher Ahmad, M.A., LL. B.

As the founder of a major world religion, the Prophet^{sa} of Islam has a tremendous impact on human history. He initiated a new civilization, and imparted an enormous personal influence on millions upon millions of Muslims' daily lives for the last fourteen centuries. No other religious leader, such as Zoroaster^{as}, Laozi, Mahavira, Moses^{as}, Gautama Buddha^{as} or Jesus^{as} has impacted the daily conduct of his followers as comprehensively and as deeply as Prophet Muhammad^{sa} did by setting a personal example in religious and secular spheres. As long as Muslims follow his ideal behavior, they progress in all fields of life. Whenever and wherever they neglect to follow him, they suffer decline.



The companions^{ra} of the Prophet^{sa} would watch him carefully and follow his practices most sincerely. Some of them would even write down what they observed or heard. All the essential ingredients of the obligatory prayer – the words and various postures– were taught and practically demonstrated by the Prophet^{sa} himself.

Offering prayers five times a day was a set example of the Prophet^{sa}, and up to this day his followers follow him in this regard. Those who live near a mosque, on hearing the call of the *Adhan* start getting ready for the morning prayer. By his personal example the Prophet^{sa} showed how to clean one's body as a preparatory act to the performance of prayer through a process of ablution.

First he washed his hands with water three times, then rinsed his mouth and cleansed the inside of his nose with water three times, washed his entire face, forearms up to elbows, passing his wet hands over his head, cleaning his ears with his fingertips, cleansing his neck, and at the end he washed both his feet three times each. During the process of ablution, recited words of prayers, and at the

end he prayed thus: "O Allah! Make me of those who seek forgiveness and make me of those who are cleansed!" This method of ablution and his words are now firmly established throughout the Islamic world and are practiced by Muslims meticulously in their daily lives.

Calling of the *Adhan* was established by the Prophet Muhammad^{sa} after he had built the first mosque. He had asked his companions^{ra} to recommend a good method of calling Muslims to the mosque when prayer time arrived. At the suggestion of one of his companions, he adopted the words of the *Adhan* and asked Hadrat Bilal^{ra} to recite the *Adhan* loudly and melodiously. From that time onwards, he himself would come to the mosque on hearing the *Adhan*, and this is practiced by Muslims

throughout the world. Most of them are awakened at dawn by hearing the *Adhan* – the very first thing that they hear at the start of each new day. Not only that, the Prophet^{sa} recommended that his followers recite the words of the *Adhan* in the ears of every newborn as the first spiritual message that the baby should hear, and this is now done at the birth of every



Muslim child.

The Prophet^{sa} built the first mosque of Islam in Medinah as a place of congregational worship and as a spiritual retreat, also as a place where he would teach Islamic doctrines and moral values to his followers. This mosque is known as *Masjid-e-Nabawi* (the Mosque of the Prophet). There is no record in the history of religion that Moses^{as}, Mahavira, Gautama Buddha^{as}, Zoroaster^{as} or Jesus^{as} built a synagogue, temple or church in their lifetime. There was no Hindu temple during the Vedic period. Following the example of the Prophet^{sa}, the tradition of building mosques flourished with great speed throughout the expanse of Islamic world — from the Arabian deserts to North Africa and Spain in the

West, and to India, Indonesia and China in the East. Later, within the vast Islamic empires, magnificent mosques were built and some of them are architectural marvels. A few of these historical mosques are: The Dome of the Rock and Al-Aqsa Mosque (Palestine), Great Mosque of Damascus (Syria), Great Mosque of Cordoba (Spain), Qurawiyan Mosque in

Fez (Morocco), Al Azher Mosque in Cairo (Egypt), Suleimania Mosque in Istanbul (Turkey), E-Jami Mosque and Shah Mosque in Isfahan (Iran), Badshahi Mosque in Lahore (Pakistan), Jamia Mosque in Delhi, (India), and the Great Mosque of Xi'an (China). There is hardly any town, locality or city in the Muslim world where there is no mosque. And it goes without saying that a mosque has deep impact on

the daily lives of Muslims.

The Prophet^{sa} personally followed each and every word of the Qur'anic guidance that was revealed to him, and he taught how to carry out Qur'anic injunctions in practice. Whereas there is no specific record how and when the founders of other religions used to pray in their lifetime. The companions^{ra} of the Prophet^{sa} would watch him carefully and follow his practices most sincerely. Some of them would even write down what they observed or heard. All the essential ingredients of the obligatory prayer – the words and various postures– were taught and practically demonstrated by the Prophet^{sa} himself. Which direction to face whilst offering the prayer, how to make the intention at the beginning,

how to stand up in straight rows behind an *Imam*, how to bow, prostrate, sit and end the prayer – all these aspects were shown in full detail by the Prophet^{sa}, and Muslims have followed his practice throughout the centuries. Before and/or after performing obligatory five daily prayers, the Prophet^{sa} used to offer extra prayers on his own either in the mosque or privately at home. These additional prayers came to be known as the *sunnah* prayers. All Muslims deem it important to follow his practice. Moreover, the Prophet^{sa} most firmly established the performance of *Jumu'ah* (Friday) prayer. The timing of *Jumu'ah* prayer, the sermon and all other relevant details were put in place by him, and are followed by Muslims up to this day.

In addition to setting his personal example in offering daily Prayers and *Jumu'ah* service, he carried out all other religious injunctions in an exemplary way — such as fasting in the month of *Ramadan*, paying the charity of *Zakat* to the poor and needy, and making pilgrimage to the House of Allah in Mecca. He illustrated all features of these religious responsibilities by practically exhibiting how to discharge them. His precise actions and clear teachings about the pillars of Islam have become guiding posts for all Muslims to mould their daily lives accordingly. His generosity in helping the needy, specially enhanced devotion to God in the month of fasting, performance of *Hajj*, celebrating the happy occasion of *Eid-ul-Fitr*, and offering animal sacrifice on *Eid-ul-Adhiya* – all are well documented, and his actions have immensely impacted lives of Muslims. It can be said without any doubt that no other faith community has such a role model in the person of their religious founder who can be followed in their current religious practices.

Purification of body, clothes, environment and the place of worship were always stressed upon by the Prophet^{sa} of Islam as a necessity for purification of the soul. The Prophet^{sa} used to say that religion was built on cleanliness, and purification was the key to prayer. The Qur'an says: "Surely Allah loves those who turn to Him and He loves those who keep themselves clean" (2:223). Hence, it is a universal practice of Muslims to wear clean clothes while offering their daily prayers. Taking a bath was the Prophet's regular routine, and he made it mandatory under certain circumstances, such as after intimacy between husband and wife. He also encouraged his followers to take bath before going

to large congregations such as *Jumu'ah* and *Eid* prayers. Following his example, many Muslims apply fragrance, and avoid eating of strong smelling food before attending such occasions.

His companions^{ra} also observed minutely his social behavior. For example, most of the Muslims try to follow his table manners. He used to wash his hands before eating, ate with his right hand, and from the front of his plate. He taught: "Mention Allah's name (*Bismillah*) before starting to eat, eat with your right hand, and eat from what is near to you." (*Bukhari and Muslim*). He followed the Qur'anic instruction (2:168) to eat *Halal* (lawfully permissible) and *Tayyib* (pure and health-wise agreeable) food. He himself never touched any *Haram* (prohibited) food or drink: "He (Allah) has made unlawful to you only that which dies of itself, and blood and the flesh of swine, and that on which the name of any other than Allah has been invoked" (2:174). Making it easy for his followers, he set the principle that everything is lawful unless it is clearly prohibited by law. Not only that, the Qur'an says: "But he who is driven by necessity, being neither disobedient nor exceeding the limit, it shall be no sin for him to take the forbidden food" (2:174). The Prophet^{sa} also set the example of eating moderately in obedience to the Qur'anic injunction "... eat and drink, but be not immoderate; surely, He does not love those who are immoderate" (7:32). The Prophet^{sa} used to take only as much food as he could eat comfortably and not leave anything on his plate after finishing his meal. He drank water slowly with three pauses. He never found fault with the food that was offered to him. After eating, the Prophet^{sa} always washed his hands and gave thanks to God. Moreover, he insisted that not only the food eaten should be *Halal*, but the same ruling should apply to the way it is obtained – the money with which it is bought — should also be lawful.

Whenever two Muslims meet, they greet each other the way the Prophet^{sa} used to greet — with a prayer, saying: "*As-salaamo alaikum*", meaning: "Peace be with you." The response to this greeting, also taught by the Prophet^{sa}, is: "*Wa alaikum-us-salaam*", meaning: "And on you be peace." Upon meeting with individuals, he used to shake hands with them. This practice is universally evident in the daily lives of all Muslims. Moreover, the Prophet^{sa} always remembered God at all significant moments of his daily

life. He would use brief Qur'anic phrases to express his intent or feelings, joy or sadness. Before starting anything of importance, he used to say *Bismillah* (In the name of Allah). On achieving his purpose, or expressing his love and adoration, he always praised the Lord by saying *Alhamdulillah* (All praise belongs to Allah). To express his happiness and appreciation on seeing something beautiful and praiseworthy, or receiving a good news, he always said, "*Maash-Allah*" (Allah has willed it) or "*Subhaan-Allah*" (Glory be to Allah). In the Holy Qur'an it is instructed that at decision making time one should not forget God, and be not egoistic by merely depending on one's own decision making faculty and foresight. The Qur'an teaches "Do not say of anything, 'I shall do that tomorrow,' without adding 'God willing'" (18:24-25). The Prophet^{sa} always followed this by saying "*Insha-Allah*" (Allah willing) when talking about any future expectation or event; and all good Muslims do the same. This has become a part of their daily vocabulary. Similarly, at times of a loss or a grief the Prophet^{sa} followed the Qur'anic statement by saying. "Surely, to Allah we belong and to Him shall we return" (2:157). These Qur'anic words are repeated verbatim by all Muslims when they hear any sad news, especially of the death of anyone.

Among social etiquette there is so much influence of the Prophet's lifestyle on a Muslim's daily conduct that it is somewhat impossible to write it down in a short article. His peaceful domestic life, hospitality, respect of guests and elders, love for the young ones, services to others, care of his neighbors, visiting the sick and sympathizing with the aggrieved are some of the features of his character. He was persecuted, attempts were made on his life and war was imposed on him and on his companions. His response was always of patience, steadfastness, courage, perseverance and forgiveness. He also set personal example of a successful administrator, legislators, magistrate, army general and head of state. Above all, he demonstrated how to invite mankind to submit to the Will of One God and how to call them towards peace and salvation.

The Holy Qur'an summarizes his characteristics in the following words: "Say, 'My prayer and sacrifice and my life and my death are all for Allah, the Lord of the worlds; He has no partner; and so I am commanded, and I am the first of those who submit'" (6:163). ♦

None of you [truly]
believes
until he wishes
for his
brother
what he wishes
for **himself**



Quotes of
Prophet Muhammad

The Holy Prophet Muhammad's Contributions to Mathematics and Science

By Dr. Zia H Shah

Science and technology are shared heritage of humanity. The Chinese, the Greeks, the Indians, the Arabs, the Europeans and the Americans have made large contributions in their time and will do so in future as well. As the Islamic Empire flourished for several centuries, while the Europe was darkened by the Dark Ages, I believe that an honest study of the causes of the Dark Ages and European renaissance will lead to the inevitable conclusion that Muhammad^{sa}, was the Light of the Dark Ages. John Davenport writes in, *an Apology for Mohammed and the Koran*:



“It is in the compositions of Friar Bacon, who was born in 1214, and who learned the Oriental languages, that we discover the most extensive acquaintance with the Arabian authors. He quotes Albumazar, Thabet-Ebu-Corah, Ali Alhacer, Alkandi, Alfraganus and Arzakeb; and seems to have been as familiar with them as with the Greek and Latin classics, especially with Avicenna, whom he calls ‘the chief and prince of philosophy.’ The great Lord Bacon, it is well known, imbibed and borrowed the first principles of his famous experimental philosophy from his predecessor and namesake Roger Bacon, a fact which indisputably establishes the derivation of the Baconian philosophical system from the descendants of Ishmael and disciples of Mohammed.”¹

In a short paragraph, John Davenport has very precisely identified all the links in the human intellectual evolution. Now I want to present George Sarton, who was a Belgian chemist and historian who migrated to USA

because of the First World War. Encyclopedia Britannica says about him, “George Alfred Leon Sarton, (born Aug. 31, 1884, Ghent—died March 22, 1956, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.), Belgian-born U.S. scholar and writer whose voluminous research and publications concerning the history of science did much to make the subject an independent discipline.”² Dr. Abdus Salam, Nobel Laureate in physics summarized Sarton’s history pertaining to the Muslim scientists in an article, *Islam and Science – Concordance or Conflict?* Salam highlighted Sarton’s evaluation of history in this article and it was published in *Review of Religions* in March 1995, he said:

“Barely a hundred years after the Holy Prophet’s death the Muslims had made it their task to master the then-known sciences. Systematically, they translated the entire corpus of the then known knowledge in their religious language, Arabic. Founding institutes of advanced study (Bait-ul-Hikmas), they acquired an ascendancy in the sciences that lasted for

the next 350 years. A semi-quantitative measure of this is given by George Sarton in his monumental *History of Science*. Sarton divides his story of the highest achievement in science into Ages, each Age lasting 50 years. With each, he associates one central figure: thus, 500-450 BC is the Age of Plato, followed by the Ages of Aristotle, Euclid, Archimedes and so on. From 750 to 1100 CE, however, it is an unbroken succession of the Ages of Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Abu'l-Wafa, Biruni and Omar Khayam. In those 350 years, Arabs, Turks, Afghans and Persians chemists, algebraists, clinicians, geographers, mathematicians, physicists and astronomers of the commonwealth of Islam held the world stage of sciences. Only after 1100 CE, in Sarton's scheme, do the first Western names begin to appear; however, for another 250 years, they share the honors with men of Islam like Ibn Rushd, Nasir-ud-din Tusi and Ibn Nafis."³

Whereas Plato, Aristotle, Euclid, and Archimedes are well known and common household names, the names of Jabir, Khwarizmi, Razi, Masudi, Abu'l-Wafa, Biruni and Omar Khayam are hardly known in the West. If George Sarton's evaluation is true and I believe it is, then what a tragedy and injustice was perpetrated under the oppression of the Catholic Church and later the British Empire that humanity came to forget the names of its great Arab and Persian heroes and benefactors. What an epiphany to learn this after centuries of distortions! So, my task here is twofold, first to show that European science was built on the Latin translations of the works of the great Muslim pioneers and secondly that the Muslim learning from 8th-12th centuries was heavily influenced by the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the literal word of God revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. For the first task let me introduce a few of the Muslim pioneer scientists and their contributions. Dr. Abdus Salam wrote about Alhazen, who was the Father of Optics:

"Ibn-al-Haitham (Alhazen, 965-1039 CE) was one of the greatest physicists of all time. He made experimental contributions of the highest order in optics. He enunciated that a ray of light, in passing through a medium, takes the path which is the easier and 'quicker'. In this he was anticipating Fermat's Principle of Least Time by many centuries. He enunciated the law of inertia, later to become Newton's first law of motion. Part V of Roger Bacon's 'Opus Majus' is practically an annotation to Ibn al Haitham's Optics."⁴

The punch line here is, "Part V of Roger

Bacon's 'Opus Majus' is practically an annotation to Ibn al Haitham's Optics." Professor Jim Al-Khalili of University of Surrey, writes in an article, *The 'first true scientist,'* about Alhazen:

"Isaac Newton is, as most will agree, the greatest physicist of all time. At the very least, he is the undisputed father of modern optics, or so we are told at school where our textbooks abound with his famous experiments with lenses and prisms, his study of the nature of light and its reflection, and the refraction and decomposition of light into the colours of the rainbow. Yet, the truth is rather greyer; and I feel it important to point out that, certainly in the field of optics, Newton himself stood on the shoulders of a giant who lived 700 years earlier. For, without doubt, another great physicist, who is worthy of ranking up alongside Newton, is a scientist born in AD 965 in what is now Iraq who went by the name of al-Hassan Ibn al-Haytham. Most people in the West will never have even heard of him."

"As a physicist myself, I am quite in awe of this man's contribution to my field, but I was fortunate enough to have recently been given the opportunity to dig a little into his life and work through my recent filming of a three-part BBC Four series on medieval Islamic scientists."⁵

Abu Abdallah Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi, earlier transliterated as Algoritmi or Algaurizin, (780- 850 CE) was a Persian mathematician, astronomer and geographer during the Abbasid Empire, a scholar in the House of Wisdom in Baghdad. In the twelfth century, Latin translations of his work on the Indian numerals introduced the decimal positional number system to the Western world. Encyclopedia Britannica has the following to say about him:

"Al-Khwarizmi lived in Baghdad, where he worked at the 'House of Wisdom' (Dar al-Hikma) under the caliphate of al-Ma'mun. (The House of Wisdom acquired and translated scientific and philosophic treatises, particularly Greek, as well as publishing original research.) Al-Khwarizmi's work on elementary algebra, al-Kitab al-mukhtasar fi hisab al-jabr wa'l-muqabala ('The Compendious Book on Calculation by Completion and Balancing'), was translated into Latin in the 12th century, from which the title and term Algebra derives. Algebra is a compilation of rules, together with demonstrations, for finding solutions of linear and quadratic equations based on intuitive geometric arguments, rather than the abstract notation now associated

with the subject. Its systematic, demonstrative approach distinguishes it from earlier treatments of the subject. It also contains sections on calculating areas and volumes of geometric figures and on the use of algebra to solve inheritance problems according to proportions prescribed by Islamic law. Elements within the work can be traced from Babylonian mathematics of the early 2nd millennium bc through Hellenistic, Hebrew, and Hindu treatises.

In the 12th century a second work by al-Khwarizmi introduced Hindu-Arabic numerals (see numerals and numeral systems) and their arithmetic to the West. It is preserved only in a Latin translation, *Algoritmi de numero Indorum* ('Al-Khwarizmi Concerning the Hindu Art of Reckoning'). From the name of the author, rendered in Latin as *algoritmi*, originated the term algorithm.

A third major book was his *Kitab surat al-ard* ('The Image of the Earth'; translated as Geography), which presented the coordinates of localities in the known world based, ultimately, on those in the Geography of Ptolemy (fl. ad 127-145) but with improved values for the length of the Mediterranean Sea and the location of cities in Asia and Africa. He also assisted in the construction of a world map for al-Ma'mun."⁶

Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni is regarded as one of the greatest scholars of the medieval Islamic era and was well versed in physics, mathematics, astronomy, and natural sciences, and also distinguished himself as a historian, chronologist and linguist. He is given the title of the "first anthropologist." He spent a large part of his life in Ghazni in modern-day Afghanistan, capital of the Ghaznavid dynasty, which ruled eastern Iranian lands and the northwestern Indian subcontinent. Encyclopedia Britannica has the following to say about him:

"Al-Biruni, in full Abu al-Rayhan Muhammad ibn Ahmad al-Biruni (born Sept. 4, 973 ce, Khwarezm, Khorasan [now in Uzbekistan]—died c. 1052, Ghazna [now Ghazni, Afg.]), Muslim astronomer, mathematician, ethnographer, anthropologist, historian, and geographer. Al-Biruni lived during a period of unusual political turmoil in the eastern Islamic world. He served more than six different princes, all of whom were known for their bellicose activities and a good number of whom met their ends in violent deaths. Nevertheless, he managed to become the most original polymath the Islamic world had ever known."⁷

Another important fact to understand the contribution of the Qur'an to early Muslim society is that there are about 750 verses in Qur'an urging Muslims to make use of reason to understand nature and thus develop their understanding of the Creator, in contrast to just 250 verses about legislation.

Al-Jahiz (real name: Abu Uthman Amr ibn Bahr al-Kinani al-Fuqaimi al-Basri), born in Basra, (781 – 869) was an Arabic prose writer and author of works of literature, Mu'tazili theology, and politico-religious polemics. In biology, Al-Jahiz introduced the concept of food chains and also proposed a scheme of animal evolution that entailed natural selection, environmental determinism and possibly the inheritance of acquired characteristics.⁸

In short, if readers would do a quick internet research about: Averroes, Avicenna, Rhazes, Alkindus, Geber, Abu'l-Wafa Buzjani, Alfarabius, Alfraganus, Albumazar, Thabet-Ebu-Corah, Arzakeb and last but not the least Khawaja Muhammad ibn Muhammad ibn Hasan Tusi, they will find all the missing links between the Greek contributors and their European admirers and scientists, which were camouflaged into oblivion, one way or the other, by the Catholic Church.

So, now I move to my second task that the Muslim learning from 8th-12th centuries was heavily influenced by the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the literal word of God, revealed to the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, over twenty three years in the sixth and the seventh centuries. How did the Holy Qur'an trigger the development of science and mathematics among the early Muslims? The best way to appreciate this is to note the close relation between astronomy and mathematics. The Holy Qur'an inspired the believers to study the phenomena of nature and showed them the connections between astronomy and mathematics, for example:

“And We (Allah) have made the night and the day two Signs, and the Sign of night We have made dark, and the Sign of day We have made sight-giving, that you may seek bounty from your Lord, and that you may know the computation of years and the science of reckoning and mathematics. And everything We have explained with a detailed explanation.” (Al Qur'an 17:13)

And:

“He (Allah) it is Who made the sun radiate a brilliant light and the moon reflect a lustre, and ordained for it stages, that you might know the number of years and the reckoning of time. Allah has not created this but in truth. He details the Signs for a people who have knowledge. Indeed, in the alternation of night

and day, and in all that Allah has created in the heavens and the earth there are Signs for a God-fearing people.” (Al Qur'an 10:6-7)

Prof. David M Bressoud explains the close relationship between astronomy and mathematics in his lecture series, *The Queen of Sciences: a History of Mathematics*:

“A third source of the patterns of mathematics is astronomy or astrology. The ancients made no clear distinction between these two fields. They studied the heavens to try to understand what was likely to happen on Earth. Some of the greatest astronomers, including Johannes Kepler were also astrologers. Kepler's work in both astronomy and astrology would lay the foundations for much of the development of calculus. This lack of distinction between astronomers and astrologers carried over to mathematicians. The emperor Tiberius is said to have banished all ‘mathematicians’ from Rome. In fact he banished the astrologers, who were predicting his downfall. Some of this confusion stems from the fact that important advances in mathematics came directly out of astronomy. By looking at the heavens, mathematicians were able to pick out patterns in much purer form than they could in the world around them.”⁹

Astronomy was one of the dominant forces behind the development of mathematics. Most people think of trigonometry in connection with land measurement and today it is used in surveying, but it was originally applied to the study of astronomical phenomena.¹⁰

Another important fact to understand the contribution of the Qur'an to early Muslim society is that there are about 750 verses in Qur'an urging Muslims to make use of reason to understand nature and thus develop their understanding of the Creator, in contrast to just 250 verses about legislation. The Holy Qur'an states:

“Do they not then look at the camel, how it is created? And at the heaven, how it is raised high? And at the mountains, how they are set up? And at the earth, how it is spread out?” (Al Qur'an 88:18-21)

And:

“In the creation of the heavens and the earth and in the alternation of the night and the day there are indeed Signs for men of understanding; Those who remember Allah while standing, sitting, and lying on their sides, and

ponder over the creation of the heavens and the earth: ‘Our Lord, Thou hast not created this in vain.’” (Al Qur'an 3:191-192)

Many of the 750 verses in the Holy Qur'an inspire believers to study the phenomena of nature, some are pertaining to the study of astronomy and a few emphasize quantitative study, for example, “The sun and the moon *run their courses* according to a fixed reckoning and calculation.” (Al Qur'an 55:6) The word used in this verse is *Be-husban*, the Arabic word for mathematics is derived from the same root as this word. Now, let me quote from a Wikipedia article, *Mathematics in medieval Islam*:

“A major impetus for the flowering of mathematics as well as astronomy in medieval Islam came from religious observances, which presented an assortment of problems in astronomy and mathematics, specifically in trigonometry, spherical geometry, algebra and arithmetic. The Islamic law of inheritance served as an impetus behind the development of algebra (derived from the Arabic al-jabr) by Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khwarizmi and other medieval Islamic mathematicians. Al-Khwarizmi's *Hisab al-jabr w'al-muqabala* devoted a chapter on the solution to the Islamic law of inheritance using algebra. He formulated the rules of inheritance as linear equations, hence his knowledge of quadratic equations was not required. Later mathematicians who specialized in the Islamic law of inheritance included Al-Hassar, who developed the modern symbolic mathematical notation for fractions in the 12th century.”

To read many other historians on the contributions of the Islamic Empire to the European renaissance, the readers may refer to an article, *Muhammad: the Light for the Dark Ages of Europe!* in a website, *Islam for the West*.¹¹

Endnotes

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Establishment of Peace and Justice in Society

By Ayesha N. Rashid

Justice and peace go hand in hand, and one cannot be attained without the other. Justice that does not lead to peace is no justice at all. The Holy Prophet^{sa} of Islam strived all his life for the establishment of peace and never discarded justice. His personal desires, family ties, fears of the opposing party, and fears of economic loss never discouraged him from making decisions based on absolute justice. Consequently, he established a model society in Medina on the pillars of peace and justice for generations to follow.

In the pre-Islamic era, Arab society suffered from anarchy, injustice, and barbarism. It was impossible for a financially or physically weak person to claim his rights. Being a woman was the lowliest human being. Killing and looting were considered enjoyable feats. However, as noble hearted men are found in every society, Arab society too consisted of a handful of them. In 591 AD, when Prophet Muhammad^{sa} was only 20 years old, some such men of Mecca joined together to establish a league that would serve justice to the oppressed. The league was called *Hilf-ul-Fudul*. Muhammad^{sa}, already known for his just behavior as a child and as a young man, eagerly volunteered to serve in the league. Members of the *Hilf-ul-Fudul* decided upon the following:

They will help those who were oppressed and will restore them their rights, as long as the last drop of water remained in the sea. And if they do not do so, they will compensate the victims out of their own belongings. (Sirat Ibni Hisham by Imam Suhaili).

While *Hilf-ul-Fudul* was established upon good intentions, it was never able to completely eradicate the injustice. Those committed to justice were far outnumbered by their opponents. One opportunity of providing justice, however, came to Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. During the time when Prophet Muhammad's opposition was at its peak, a man from outside Mecca presented his case to the members of *Hilf-ul-Fudul*. The person had some outstanding money owed to him from Abu Jahl, that Abu Jahl refused to repay. Knowing full well that Abu Jahl was Prophet Muhammad's staunch opponent, some young men suggested that the person should approach the Prophet^{sa} as he too was a member of *Hilf-ul-Fudul*. They expected Prophet Muhammad^{sa} would either refuse to approach Abu Jahl out of fear, or would be humiliated in the process.

When the man implored Prophet Muhammad^{sa} to help, the Prophet^{sa} went to Abu Jahl without hesitation and demanded the owed debt. Whether it was the Prophet Muhammad's grandeur or the power of justice, Abu Jahl returned the money in an instant (Hisham). *Hilf-ul-Fudul* was the seed of peace and justice in the Arab society that later blossomed with the advent of Islam.

The history of mankind is blood-stained with long and brutal wars. Every century lists dozens of wars that killed or maimed millions. Every war introduced atrocities: women



It is reported in Abu Dawud that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, “The possibility of peace should always be kept in view.” For example at the Battle of the Ditch, the Holy Prophet^{sa} made it clear that the battle would automatically end either on peace or surrender.

raped, children molested, old men and women tortured, vegetation burnt, and houses leveled. In essence, “all is fair in war and love” was religiously followed. The concept of rules of war was unheard of. Some rules prior to Islam can be found in the Old Testament:

When thou shalt besiege a city a long time, in making war against it to take it, thou shalt not destroy the trees thereof by forcing an axe against them: for thou mayest eat of them, and thou shalt not cut them down (for the tree of the field is man's life) to employ them in the siege: Only the trees which thou knowest that they be not trees for meat, thou shalt destroy and cut them down; and thou shalt build bulwarks against the city that maketh war with thee, until it be subdued. (Deuteronomy 20:19-20)

Islamic injunctions concerning warfare

The first rule in the Holy Qur'an is that only defensive wars are permitted (2:191). Second, the Qur'an admonishes believers against transgression and recognizes that persecution is worse than killing, i.e. commanding believers to refrain from persecuting the enemy in any condition (2:192). Third, the Qur'an commands to stop fighting if the enemy desists (2:193). Lastly, the Qur'an makes sure that the believ-

ers' fighting in the cause of Allah is only to end persecution and for freedom of religion. Once freedom of religion is attained and the enemy desists from further fighting, then the believers are not allowed to continue fighting (2:194). Similarly, the Qur'an references 4:95, 22:40-42, 8:39-41, and 8:62-63, emphasize rules of war that aim to establish justice and peace.

Prophet Muhammad^{sa} fought every battle based on these rules of engagement. Without exception, he fought only defensive wars. In addition to the Qur'anic rules of war, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} laid down the following obligations upon all Muslims:

Peace – the ultimate goal of wars

It is reported in *Abu Dawud* that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, “The possibility of peace should always be kept in view.” For example at the Battle of the Ditch, the Holy Prophet^{sa} made it clear that the battle would automatically end either on peace or surrender.

The famous scholar Morgolis's account is worth mentioning here, he writes:

“The Great Invasion (Battle of Ditch) which Mohammed declared had been miraculously frustrated, was due to, or believed to be due, to the propaganda of members of

Banu-Nazir, whom the Prophet had punished with banishment only. Should he banish the Qureza, he would thereby be setting free a fresh set of propagandists. On the other hand, those who had taken part openly with the invaders of Medina could not very well be permitted to remain there. To banish them was unsafe; to permit them to remain was yet more dangerous. Hence, they must die.”

It is particularly noticeable that he had no intention to exterminate people or damage their property. Instead it was only to establish peace and freedom of conscience.

Prohibition of treachery

To avoid deception and trickery, the Holy Prophet^{sa} categorically forbade resorting to treachery (*Muslim*). Once he made a pact of peace or a promise with an ally, he never violated that pact. He said: “O Muslims! Go in the name of Allah and fight only for the sake of Allah! But beware, do not be dishonest in what you get and do not cheat or break promises or covenants with your enemy.”

Forbiddance of mutilation of bodies

Mutilating dead bodies is one of the foremost war crimes of all times. Hardly any war in world history has ended without heaps of disfigured human body parts. During World War II, the United States military personnel proudly mutilated Japanese Army personnel. They used mutilated body parts as “war trophies” and “war souvenirs.” A US congressman gifted a cut off arm of a Japanese soldier to President Franklin Roosevelt as a letter opener. Thankfully, President Roosevelt returned it and ordered for its proper burial. Only in 1942, mutilation was officially forbidden in the US. Despite the fact that his beloved Uncle Hamza’s body was mutilated in the Battle of Uhud, the Holy Prophet^{sa} forbade mutilation. He said, “Muslims are forbidden altogether to mutilate the dead” (*Muslim*). At another place he said, “No disfigurement of the face is to be permitted.”

4. Forbiddance of Killing Women and Children

The Holy Prophet^{sa} transformed the very idea of fighting wars from brutality to mercy. When an army embarks upon a fight, the only thing it cares for is total annihilation of the enemy. It does not bother them if women and children and the weak and the elderly come under this annihilation. Various Bible verses

command to kill women and children. For instance, it says, “And to the others he said in mine hearing, Go ye after him through the city, and smite: let not your eye spare, neither have ye pity: Slay utterly old and young, both maids, and little children, and woman: but come not near any man upon whom is the mark; and begin at my sanctuary. Then they began at the ancient men which were before the house” (Ezekiel 9:5-6). It is an established fact that women and children always suffer the most during wars. According to reports, out of 100,000 civilian deaths in Iraq war, 46 percent were children under the age of 15. The Holy Prophet^{sa} recognized these atrocities and forbade killing of women, children, the elderly and decrepit (*Muslim*).

Civilian rights must be fulfilled

The Holy Prophet^{sa} said, “Upon entering the enemy’s territory, Muslims should not strike terror into the general population. They should permit no ill-treatment of the common folk” (*Muslim*). Similarly, even in wartimes he recognized the needs of civilians. He declared, “A Muslim army should not camp in a place where it causes hassle to the general public. When it marches it should take care not to block the road nor cause discomfort to other wayfarers.” This not only ensures peace and justice at the time of war but also demonstrates his deep care for people despite the fact that they are his enemies.

Dignity of religious figures and foreign emissaries

The Holy Prophet^{sa} held priests and ministers of other religions in high esteem. Therefore, he commanded Muslims to not interfere with priests and religious functionaries and leaders. Similarly, he commanded that emissaries and delegates of other countries should be highly respected even though they be discourteous. This promotes world peace.

Rights of prisoners of war

Prisoners of Wars (POWs) usually receive harsh treatment from the victorious army. They are tortured mentally and physically and are kept away from their families. None of us can forget the horrendous tales of POWs from the Afghan and Iraq wars involving torture, sexual degradation, and religious persecution. Let’s compare this modern day treatment of POWs with those at the time of Islam.

According to *Abu Dawud*, the Holy Prophet^{sa} said, “When prisoners of war are put under guard, those closely related should be placed together” so they are not deprived of seeing their loved ones. He directed Muslims to provide comfort to the POWs more than their own comfort (*Tirmidhi*). In the tribal system, POWs were generally freed upon payment of a ransom or enslaved. On many occasions, the only ransom asked of those POWs was to teach unlettered Muslims how to read and write. The Holy Prophet^{sa} commanded that if a Muslim mistreated a POW, then his punishment would be freeing the prisoner without ransom. Muslims were responsible for providing food and clothing to the POWs comparable to their own standard of living.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} established these rules to provide justice and establish peace in the world 1,400 years ago. Only in 1949 the Geneva Convention recognized the need of establishing International laws for wars and its victims. This Convention in fact adopted most of the Islamic rules. However, these laws are yet to be fully enacted. Soldiers from the United States—along with soldiers from several other nations—have routinely violated these laws.

In recent years, some so-called Muslims have tried to indulge in their obscure version of jihad. They contend their acts of violence are retaliation against the US forces. However, while doing so they violated all the rules set forth by the Holy Prophet^{sa}. Nearly 3,000 civilians, including women and children, lost their lives at the hands of these extremists on September 11, 2011. Since 9/11, another 43,000 civilians in Pakistan have lost their lives. In the name of Islam, these so-called Muslims have attacked all those whom the Holy Prophet^{sa} strictly forbade, and specifically protected. Their enemy is not the US... it’s the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

These are a few of the examples of justice and peace Prophet Muhammad^{sa} demonstrated to the world. His example is unmatched in world history. Should the world apply his examples of justice, peace would soon follow.

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The Holy Prophet Muhammad's Reaction to **Blasphemy**

By Naveed Ahmed Malik

Mecca. It has been some years since the call to prophethood. The Quraish, devout idol worshippers, have gone from ignoring to abusing Muhammad^{sa} the Messenger of Allah. Whereas prior to prophethood, they extolled him as *Amin* and *Siddiq*, they now take to calling him a vile word: *mudhammam*, meaning *reviled one*. When his ardent companions learn of this, they anxiously report it to the Holy Prophet^{sa}.

How does the founder of the religion of Islam react to this blasphemy?

He but smiles and replies, “My name is Muhammad. How can someone who is ‘Muhammad’ [meaning, ‘the most praised’] be called *mudhammam*? Look how God protects me from their cursing.”¹ The incident ended there and nothing more was said or done by the Holy Prophet^{sa} or the Muslims.

Missing Context

These days, whenever an insult to Islam surfaces from a Western nation, small segments of the Muslim world—incited by radical clerics or terrorist groups—react violently. Worldwide media then covers this reaction extensively, deliberately portraying it as the general Muslim reaction—when it most certainly is not. Statistically speaking, for every individual Muslim who takes to the street to protest—non-violently—there are more than 10,000 Muslims who stay home.² Far fewer take to violence.

Nonetheless, the repeated violent reaction from a section of the Muslim world—which we condemn as unacceptable and un-Islamic—begs the question: “What does Islam teach regarding blasphemy?” Critics exploit such violent reactions to argue—and innocent onlookers mistakenly conclude—that Islam is a violent religion, intolerant of free speech.

Various Muslim clerics exacerbate this notion by asserting that blasphemy—even when perpetrated by non-Muslims—is punishable by death. This, however, is far from the truth.

Lost in this discussion is the noble example of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, the founder of Islam. How did the Prophet^{sa} react to blasphemy? As per the Holy Qur’an (3:133), Muslims are obligated to act upon the Holy Prophet’s^{sa} *sunnah*, or example. Understanding his reaction to blasphemy, then, will clarify Islam’s pristine teachings for both non-Muslims and misguided Muslims alike, *insh-Allah*.

Blasphemy Prohibited in the Holy Qur’an

Numerous verses from the Holy Qur’an and admonitions by the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} make it clear that blasphemy is prohibited in Islam. Accordingly, we read in the Holy Qur’an:

“And revile not those whom they call upon beside Allah, lest they, out of spite, revile Allah in *their* ignorance” (6:109).

Reaction to Blasphemy in the Holy Qur’an

The prohibition on *engaging* in blasphemy does not mean that Muslims will never encounter blasphemy. So the Qur’an, being the most perfect and complete moral code for mankind, also guides man on how to react to blasphemy. Multiple verses of the Holy Qur’an guide Muslims to simply turn away from unseemly speech—not to react violently to it.

“And when thou seest those who engage in *vain discourse concerning* Our Signs, then turn thou away from them until they engage in a discourse other than that” (6:69).

“And when they hear vain talk, they turn away from it and say, ‘Unto us our works and

These days, whenever an insult to Islam surfaces from a Western nation, small segments of the Muslim world—incited by radical clerics or terrorist groups—react violently. Worldwide media then covers this reaction extensively, deliberately portraying it as the general Muslim reaction—when it most certainly is not.

unto you your works. Peace be to you. We seek not the ignorant” (28:56).

However clear these verses may be, small segments of the Muslim world ignore (or are wholly ignorant of) these Qur’anic injunctions.

The Holy Prophet’s Reaction to Blasphemy

The Holy Qur’an—like any scripture—is open to misinterpretation, which is why it is instructive to look at the example of the person to whom the Book was revealed. Not only is following the *sunnah* of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} obligatory upon every Muslim, but he was also once described as “the Qur’an personified” by his wife Ayesha^{ra}, which makes him the most authentic source of understanding true Islamic teachings. Examining instances in which the Holy Prophet^{sa} reacted to blasphemy help shed clarifying and definitive light on the above-noted verses.

The incident in Mecca noted at the outset should suffice, but lest the critic argue that the Prophet^{sa} and his small band of followers were in a position of weakness and thus, naturally, ‘forbearing,’ we present another incident from Madinah.

Abdullah bin Ubayy

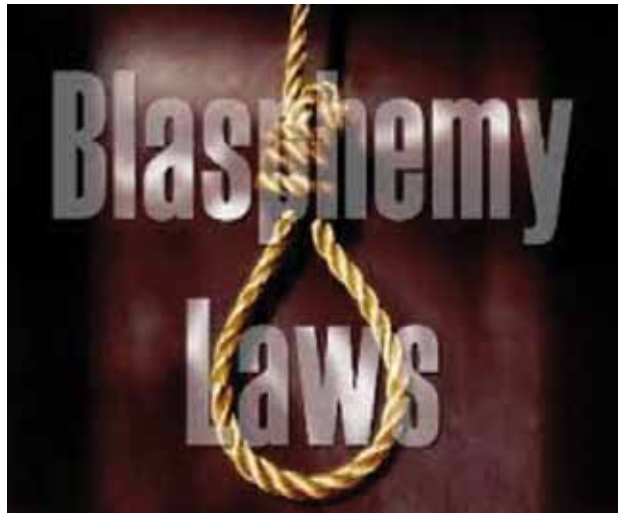
After thirteen years of bitter persecution in Mecca, the Holy Prophet^{sa} arrives to Yathrib and the city is renamed *Madina-tun-Nabi*, or ‘City of the Prophet’—Madinah for short. This greatly upsets Abdullah bin Ubayy bin Salul, a *munafiq* (Muslim in name but hypocrite in reality), who himself has harbored hopes of becoming the chief of the city, a title which is readily bestowed—by Muslim and non-Muslim alike—upon the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Five years after the Prophet’s^{sa} arrival, Abdullah sees his opportunity to dethrone the former. A battle has just ended in Muraishi. Abdullah slanders the Prophet^{sa}, blaming him for the troubles facing the people of Madinah (in the form of hostilities waged by the Meccans). He proclaims, “Now wait till we return to Madinah; then the most honored one

among us shall surely expel the one meanest among us” (by this, of course, he meant that he would expel the Prophet^{sa}.) The proclamation is forever recorded in the Holy Qur’an as well (63:9).

Upon hearing this, his son, a faithful Muslim, approaches the Holy Prophet^{sa} and asks whether he intends to have his father killed. The Holy Prophet^{sa} replies: “Have no fear. So long as your father remains with us, we shall make our companionship pleasant unto him.”

But Abdullah’s son has not come to beg for his father’s life; rather, he has come to



Blasphemy has no place among the civilized

request permission to carry out the execution. The Prophet^{sa}, a religious head and governor of the city, chooses not just to ignore the blasphemy, but promises comfort to Abdullah bin Ubayy. Years later, upon Abdullah bin Ubayy’s natural death, the Prophet^{sa} gives his own shirt to Abdullah’s son to shroud his father in, and himself leads his funeral prayer—over the objections of his close companions.³

How can those who seek to learn about, or claim to follow, such a man, believe that blasphemy warrants any sort of violent reaction?

We return to where we began: Mecca. As the Prophet^{sa} rests, someone throws a foul-smelling object into his home (something which happened frequently). He picks the object up, takes it out of his home and addresses the people on the street: ‘O Banu Abdu Manaf! is this how you fulfill the right of your neighbor?’⁴ Beyond ignoring blasphemy, the Noble Prophet^{sa} only ever appealed only to public decency, respect and courtesy.

The Excellent Exemplar

There needn’t be further elaboration on so fine a point: Muslims are expressly forbidden to react with violence to blasphemy, as is clear from the Holy Qur’an and the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Allah the Almighty favored Muhammad^{sa} the Messenger of Allah more than any other person in all of creation. Numerous times He recorded the blasphemy committed against our Master^{sa} in the Holy Qur’an (*vide* 15:7, 21:37, 17:48, 21:6, 16:102, etc.), but He also consoled His Noble Prophet^{sa} with these words:

“We will, surely, suffice thee against those who mock” (15:96).

Misguided Muslims should look to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community’s example. Ahmadi Muslims do also protest such blasphemy, but by peaceful means such as the *jihād of the pen* waged by the founder of the Community, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad^{as} of Qadian. They take such incidents as opportunities to educate others on the life of the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and the true teachings of Islam.

Non-Muslims should also take a page out of the Holy Book of Islam: blasphemy has no place among the civilized. Those who seek to injure the feelings of others out of hate or ignorance should be given no time or attention.

We close by calling down blessings upon, and directing the reader’s attention to, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa}: he was a prophet of God, an emperor, and a general. In the three incidents cited in this article, and countless others not, the Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} could have taken up the sword against blasphemy, or allowed his many followers to do the same. After all, like today’s many provocations, these were deliberate slights designed to injure the feelings of Muslims. But he did no such thing.

Rather, the Prince of Peace^{sa} displayed the virtues of forgiveness and forbearance, of tolerance and respect, and illustrated how he was “the Qur’an personified” and why he has been called “the excellent exemplar”—if only we would follow him.

Endnotes

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⁴*Tarikh Tabari*, Vol. 2, p. 241, Dar-ul Fikr, Lebanon, 2nd ed., 2002.

The Farewell Address of the Holy Prophet^{sa}

“O men, lend me an attentive ear. For I know not whether I will stand before you again in this valley and address you as I address you now. Your lives and your possessions have been made immune by God to attacks by one another until the Day of Judgment. ...Remember, you must always treat your wives well. God has charged you with the duty of looking after them. Woman is weak and cannot protect her own rights. When you married, God appointed you the trustees of those rights. You brought your wives to your homes under the Law of God. You must not, therefore, insult the trust which God has placed in your hands. O men, you still have in your possession some prisoners of war. I advise you, therefore, to feed them and to clothe them in the same way and style as you feed and clothe yourselves. O men, what I say to you, you must hear and remember. All Muslims are as brethren to one another. All of you are equal. All men, whatever nation or tribe they may belong to, and whatever station in life they may hold, are equal. Even as the fingers of the two hands are equal, so are human beings equal to one another. An Arab has no preference over a non-Arab, nor a non-Arab over an Arab; nor is a white one to be preferred to a dark one, nor a dark one to a white one. No one has any right, any superiority to claim over another. You are as brothers. God made the lives, property and honor of every man sacred. To take any man’s life or his property, or attack his honor, is as unjust and wrong as to violate the sacredness of this day, this month, and this territory.”

(Sihah Sitta, Tabari, Hisham and Khamis).

Holy Prophet's love and service to humanity

By Dr. Khaula Rehman

The Farewell Address of the Holy Prophet^{sa} is the essence of his teachings and his actions. It shows how deep was his concern to safeguard the rights of the poor and the weak section of the society. His life was a living testimony of the Qur'anic verse:

“You are the best people raised for the good of mankind; you enjoin what is good and forbid evil and believe in Allah.”
(Al Qur'an 3:111)

Few Glimpses of the Holy Prophet's Life:

If we go back in history, there is no one to be found, who had such love for the service of humanity, as the Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. Even before his prophethood, at the age of twenty, he entered into an association called “*Hilf-ul-Fudul*.”¹ The members of this association unanimously took an oath that they will, forever, restrain from injustice and always assist the oppressed and protect their rights, regardless of their tribes.

At the age of 25, when he married Hadrat Khadija^{ra}, she gave all her wealth as well as the slaves, to the Holy Prophet^{sa}. He was a poor man and this was the first time he became rich and financially successful. What he did with this wealth is a lesson for all mankind. He freed all the slaves and distributed the wealth among the poor and the needy.

It was a constant practice of the Holy Prophet^{sa} that he would treat his servants with



extreme love, like his own kith and kin. Zaid^{ra} bin Harith, who was one of the slaves freed by Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, refused to go with his father and stated: “Father! who does not love his parents? My heart is full of love for you and mother. But I love this man Muhammad so much that I cannot think of living elsewhere than with him.”²

He constantly exhorted those who owned slaves to treat them kindly and well. Some of his sayings about treatment of slaves are as follows:

“If the owner of a slave beat or abused him, the only reparation that he could make is to set the slave free”. (Muslim, Kitab-ul-Iman).³

He said: “If a person owning a slave sets him free, God will in recompense save every part of his body corresponding to every part of the slave's body from the torment of Hell.”⁴

“He who has such authority over his brother should feed him with the kind of food he himself eats; clothe him with the kind of clothes he himself wears and should not set him a task beyond his strength and should himself help him in whatever he is asked to do.”⁵

When the Holy Prophet^{sa} had his first revelation from God, he came back from Cave Hira fearful, shaking and trembling, with the

responsibility, God had put on his shoulders. Hadrat Khadija^{ra}, his wife, who was intimately aware of his life, gave the testimony for his love of humanity and service to mankind by saying:

“Nay! Nay! By God, Allah shall never dishonor you. You treat your kith and kin with love, and are truthful, and mitigate the burdens of others. You have brought together lost virtues within yourself, and you are hospitable, and you assist others in the way of truth.”⁶

The Holy Prophet^{sa} was always concerned for improving the condition of the poor. When Islam began to be generally accepted over the greater part of Arabia, the Holy Prophet^{sa} often received large quantities of goods and money, which he immediately distributed amongst those who were in need.

On one occasion his daughter Fatima^{ra} came to him and, showing him her calloused hands due to crushing grain with stones. She requested that a slave might be allotted to her to lighten her labor. The Prophet^{sa} replied: “I shall tell you something which will prove to be of far greater worth than a slave. When you go to bed at night you should utter the praise of God thirty-three times, and affirm His perfection an equal number of times and affirm His greatness thirty-four times. This



will help you a great deal more than could the possession of a slave.” (Bukhari)

On another occasion during the hot weather, when he was passing through a street, he observed a poor man carrying heavy loads from one place to another. He had a heavy coating of perspiration and dust and looked depressed. The Holy Prophet^{sa} approached him stealthily from the back and, as children sometimes do in fun, he covered the laborer’s eyes with his hands, expecting him to guess who he was. The man started feeling over the body of the Prophet^{sa} and realized that it was the Holy Prophet^{sa} himself. He probably guessed also that nobody else would show such intimate affection for a man in this condition. Being pleased and encouraged, he pressed against the Holy Prophet’s body and clasped him to himself from the back rubbing his dust and sweat-covered body against the clothes of the Prophet^{sa}, desiring perhaps to ascertain how far the Prophet^{sa} would be willing to indulge him. The Prophet^{sa} went on smiling and did not ask him to desist. When the man had been put in a thoroughly happy mood the Prophet^{sa} said to him, “I possess a slave; do you think anybody will be willing

to buy him?” The man realized that probably there was nobody in the whole world, save the Holy Prophet^{sa} himself who would be ready to see any worth in him, and with a melancholy sigh he replied, “O Messenger of Allah! there is nobody in this world who would be prepared to purchase me.” The Prophet^{sa} said, “No! No! You must not say that. You are of great worth in the Eyes of God.”⁷

He always treated his neighbors with extreme kindness and consideration. Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates, “On one occasion the Holy Prophet exclaimed: ‘I call God to witness that he is not a believer! I call God to witness that he is not a believer! I call God to witness that he is not a believer!’ The companions inquired: ‘Who is not a believer, O Messenger of Allah?’ and he replied, “He whose neighbor is not secure against injury and ill-treatment at his hands.” (Muslim)

He treated not only his near relatives but even remote ones and anybody connected with them with great consideration. Whenever he sacrificed an animal he would send a portion of the meat to the friends of Khadija^{ra} (his deceased wife) and told his wives never to overlook them on such occasions.

The following description of his person and character is taken from Sir William Muir’s, “Life of Muhammad”:⁸

“A remarkable feature was the urbanity and consideration with which Muhammad treated even the most insignificant of his followers. Modesty and kindness, patience, self denial, and generosity, pervaded his conduct, and riveted the affections of all around him. He disliked to say No. If unable to answer a petitioner in the affirmative, he preferred silence. He was not known ever to refuse an invitation to the house even of the meanest, nor to decline a proffered present however small. He possessed the rare faculty of making each individual in a company think that he was the favoured guest. If he met anyone rejoicing at success he would seize him eagerly and cordially by the hand. With the bereaved and afflicted he sympathised tenderly. Gentle and unbending towards little children, he would not disdain to accost a group of them at play with the salutation of peace. He shared his food, even in times of scarcity, with others, and was sedulously solicitous for the personal comfort of everyone about him. A kindly and benevolent disposition pervaded all those illustrations of his character”.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} was always humble and generous and always helped humanity to his utmost. He always tended to the needs of poor, needy, sick, young and old, without any distinction of color, creed or tribe. Allah says in the Holy Qur’an:

“Allah and His angels send blessings on the Prophet. O ye who believe, you also should invoke blessings on him and salute him with the salutation of peace.” (Al Qur’an 33:57) ♦

Endnotes

¹ The Life and Character of The seal of Prophets, Vol.1 By Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad, page 144-145. Ar-Raudul-Anf, By Imam Abul-Qasim

² Abdur-Rahman Suhaili, volume 1, p.242, Babu Hilal, Fudul, Dar-ul-Kutub-il-Ilmiyyah, Beirut, Lebanon, First Edition (2001)

³ Life of Muhammad by Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad page 24

⁴ Life of Muhammad by Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad page 343

⁵ Life of Muhammad by Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad page 343

⁶ The Life and Character of The seal of Prophets, Vol.1 By Hadrat Mirza Bashir Ahmad Sahih Bukhari, kitab Bad’ul-Wahi, Bab no.3, Hadith no.3

⁷ Life of Muhammad by Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmood Ahmad page 340

⁸ Life of Mahomet, Smith, Elder & CO, London, 1878, page 525

Love and reverence for the Holy Prophet Muhammad

By Seher Mujeeb Chowdhry

The recent incidents concerning the media portrayal of the Prophet^{sa} of Islam has caused painful unrest in the Muslim world. Certain places have been ruled by chaos, heinous acts have been committed in retaliation, and onlookers are left with a picture that conveys everything that is not peaceful. However, those who are his true followers have shown patience, tolerance, and dignity, in spite of everything the world will say about him. So what is it about Prophet Muhammad^{sa} that stirs up such an emotional reaction within his believers?

It is a well known fact to Muslims that when Prophet Muhammad^{sa} came, he came for the entire world. He came as a model for all of mankind. One can easily relate to him seeing as he's the only Prophet^{sa} whose life we've known in detail from start to finish.

"It is impossible for anyone who studies the life and character of the great Prophet of Arabia, who knows how he taught and how he lived, to feel anything but reverence for that mighty Prophet, one of the great messengers of the Supreme." Annie Besant, author of *Life and Teachings of Muhammad* (Taken from Hadrat Khalifa-tul-Masih's Friday Sermon of Oct 5, 2012)

Born at a time when evil was rampant in the deserts of Arabia, he ripened into the purest of human beings. While everyone else gambled, mistreated their slaves and women, and busied themselves in feuds that blew up into all out wars, Muhammad^{sa} remained honest and true throughout his upbringing. So much so that he even acquired the nickname *As-Sadiq* (the truthful one), and he kept this reputation for the rest of his days. Once he became a prophet under the command of God he officially introduced mankind to the ways of creating a better civilization.

Slavery was prevalent among the inhabitants of Arabia; it was not uncommon for masters to mistreat their slaves. Their insignificance allowed their owners to take their lives, without having to answer for it. Now in regards to slavery, one could argue that Prophet Muhammad^{sa} didn't abolish slavery, whereas President Abraham Lincoln did in his time. True, however, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} did change the score. Just as we all belonged to one brotherhood he taught that slaves

What they said About Prophet Muhammad

Thomas Carlyle, the Scottish historian said:

"They call him a prophet, you say? Why, he stood there face to face with them, here, not enshrined in any mystery, visibly clouting his own cloak, cobbling his own shoes, fighting, counselling, ordering in the midst of them. They must have seen what kind of a man he was, let him be called what ye like. No emperor with his tiaras was obeyed as this man in a cloak of his own clouting. During three and twenty years of rough, actual trial, I find something of a veritable hero necessary for that of itself."

Islamic moments- FaceBook Group- Design by Xenia Y



were also our equals deserving of that same dignity. Slaves were granted so many rights that it became impractical for the very idea of slavery to go on. Prophet Muhammad^{sa} went above and beyond any prophet as a revered and influential man. He did more than talk the talk, he walked the walk, and it was who he was. Looking after the poor, the tenderness he had for children, honoring people's property, these were things he was doing before he preached them. Before prophethood when he married, he had freed all the slaves he inherited from his wife, and gave away all the riches he received from her to the poor. There was so much emphasis on the poor and the importance of giving charity, more than any other religion.

"Philosopher, orator, apostle, legislator, warrior, conqueror of ideas, restorer of rational dogmas, the founder of twenty terrestrial empires and of one spiritual empire, that is Muhammad. As regards all standards by which human greatness may be measured, we may ask, is there any man greater than he?" French Philosopher Lamartine, author of *History of Turkey*. (Taken from Hadrat Khalifa-tul-Masih's Friday Sermon of Oct 5, 2012)

His life in Medinah required adopting a more political role. He became a leader for the people of Medinah after having been driven out of his birthplace, Mecca. There

he ruled over a multicultural nation where he proclaimed freedom of religion and peace. While in Medinah he and his followers were forced to take part in wars against the Meccan armies, having to fight with very little, proving that they were always on the defensive. However, despite these odds Prophet Muhammad^{sa} would always come out victorious.

"Head of the State as well as the Church, he was Caesar and Pope in one; but he was Pope without the Popes pretensions, and Caesar without the legions of Caesar; without a standing army, without a bodyguard, without a police force, without a fixed revenue. If ever a man ruled by a right divine, it was Muhammad, for he had all the powers without their supports." R. Bosworth Smith 'Muhammad and Muhammadanism'. Page 262 (Taken from Hadrat Khalifa-tul-Masih's Friday Sermon of Oct 5, 2012)

We look at him with admiration and awe, when one studies his life it's hard to see him as an average Joe. He suffered many hardships in his days, he took on a belief that ruled the hearts of men for centuries, and managed to break that with his peaceful demeanor. One wonders how the world would be if he were alive today, practicing those same qualities that attracted thousands upon thousands to him all those years ago. ♦

“To my Friend. The Highest of the High”

A Lesson in the Life of the Holy Prophet & His Love of God

By Faheem Younus

We are America. We are a great society, a powerful nation. We talk about justice, equality and opportunity. Our systems and knowledge are boasted as being inimitable. But what do we know about love? I mean *true* love.

Let's use the 2006 memoir by Elizabeth Gilbert, “Eat, Pray, Love” as a guide. I don't intend to trash the book. It's full of vivid descriptions and tactful inflections. I recommend this book because one Hollywood movie, two Oprah appearances, and 169 weeks on the New York Times Bestsellers list make it a true reflection of our cultural norms. We relate to the story: A successful American searching for true happiness. Reeling from divorce and depression, Gilbert spent a year in Italy, India and Indonesia to explore the art of pleasure, devotion, and love.

But don't waste your money if you desire to understand *true* love. Particularly, the kind of love we rarely talk about: The love of God. Love – which the Bible calls “patient, kind and not self-seeking.” Love – which the Qur'an considers capable of “enduring the loss of life, wealth and fruits.” Instead you should read the memoir of the man revered by one fifth of the world's population – Prophet Muhammad^{sa}.

Wait. Our antennas perk up. Loving God is risky business. Our gut tells us: giving up your freedom for the divine is a bad deal. You see, we love what we can control. For example, a dog, a phone, a car. Does “Eat, Pray, Love” tell us how to control God?

No. It doesn't.

And yes, Prophet Muhammad^{sa} ate, prayed, loved and yet was able to remain fully committed to his God. That's because he was not egoistic; his actions were to please his Maker. Let's break it down.

Eat

Gilbert's idea of “eat” – no different than millions of us – was to indulge in fine Italian breads, wine, and tiramisu. But the Prophet's family never ate to their fill for three successive days up until the day he died. Gilbert had self-serving reasons to like her publishers since they paid for her lavish vacation as an advance for her promised book. But Prophet

“You took my loving wife and children away – but I love you. You made me migrate from my homeland, leaving all my friends and possessions behind – but I love you. You tried me with hunger, pain, illness and war – but I love you. I pray to you. I worship you.”

Muhammad^{sa}, despite facing such hunger pangs that at times his best option was to tie slabs of rocks on his belly, loved God for the sole reason that he believed in Him.

Pray

In Gilbert's book – and the larger Western society – you find the concept of prayer being reduced to buzz words like “self-discovery” and “devotion” without an emphasis on gratefulness. Prophet Muhammad^{sa}, on the other hand, showed such devotion that his feet would swell up during nightly prayers and he would sob with the sound of a boiling pot. On being asked why he prayed with such fervor when he was guaranteed forgiveness, he replied, “Should I not be a grateful servant of God?”

Love

The book – and sadly some pockets of our culture – expounds selfishness as a virtue and confuses the word “love” with flirt and romance. Climbing divorce rates, rampant infidelity and incessant domestic violence point to our inability to love under stress. For us, love has to be on “my” terms and life has to be fair. Our love is bruised by rejections. Perhaps, you disagree? Try rejecting someone's “Friend request” on Facebook. But the true essence of love is displayed when the beloved takes us through seemingly unfair trials.

This turns many towards atheism as they are unable to reconcile a God Who allows a child to die of leukemia, or Who would not intervene to stop the devastation of the tsunami or the Holocaust.

But the life of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} – which could be titled, “Like, Love, Worship”

– teaches us that you “like” things, “love” people but “worship” God. The paradigm of creator vs. creation requires unconditional worship.

That's where the Cinderella story of Prophet Muhammad^{sa} begins. The Prophet^{sa} was born an orphan, lost his mother at the age of six and lost the guardianship of his grandfather at the age of eight. When he started living in foster care at his uncle's house, it was usual for his aunt to distribute gifts to her own children, leaving out the little boy Muhammad^{sa}. Yet these trials didn't turn him away from God; they transformed him into a seeker.

At the age of 40 when he established communion with God, the chiefs of Mecca proposed a price for his newfound love. “Give up your love for God and stop preaching His message,” they said, “and we will flood you with the riches and pleasures of this world.”

The Prophet^{sa} responded, “I will not renounce my message from God even if they put the sun on my right hand and the moon on my left.”

Over the next two decades, the Prophet^{sa} reaffirmed his love for God despite enduring one loss after another. Imagine him saying to God: “You took my loving wife and children away – but I love you. You made me migrate from my homeland, leaving all my friends and possessions behind – but I love you. You tried me with hunger, pain, illness and war – but I love you. I pray to you. I worship you.”

You can't learn this from the eat-pray-love culture of narcissism.

At his deathbed, as the Prophet's eyes began to close, he said to God: “To my Friend. The Highest of the High.”

The Prophet's Friend showed ultimate reciprocity to his love at multiple places in the Holy Qur'an. In one such place He states in 3:31, “Say [O Prophet Muhammad]: ‘If you love God, follow me and God will love you, and forgive your sins,’” reminding Muslims that love of the Prophet^{sa} was the key to winning God's love and unlocking the floodgates of His mercy.

The result? Over a billion Muslims worldwide love Prophet Muhammad^{sa} and his memoir remains a bestseller in their hearts for over 75,000 weeks...and still counting. ♦

Paradise. The word provokes a plethora of images, impressions, and sensations. For those who have known the pleasure of material wealth and for those who have not, it conjures up images of untold riches and innumerable comforts. For those whose views are more religious, the word's impressions are more likely sculpted by scripture: a land flowing with milk and honey, the Lord's Kingdom come, a garden beneath which rivers flow. And interestingly, for saints and secularists alike, the word likely stirs the same sensations of well-being and harmony, albeit achieved and experienced in different ways—achieved via compassion in the view of the former and justice in the view of the latter. But for all its varying and sometimes conflicting implications, the undercurrent of the word *paradise* remains singular throughout, the one and the same: Peace. How is this sense of peace to be achieved? Islam posits an extensive framework for achieving such a state of peace and paradise.

The Rights of Neighbors

By: Rabia Munawar Mir

Karen Armstrong writes in her book “Islam: A Brief History” that Islam is an inherently political system because it envisions a society defined by social justice and therefore requires the application of certain rules to make its vision a reality.¹ According to Islam, people's relations are governed by rights and obligations—rights of one's own self and of others and obligations to oneself and to others. Each relationship has its own scope of rights and obligations within the Islamic context. And each party within any relationship is urged to fulfill its obligations to the utmost, to grant the rights of others and to act with integrity in all relational spheres. But there is one specific sphere of mutual rights and obligations which although occupies a high stature in Islam, it is a relationship bound neither by the ties of blood nor by marriage but by the ties of humanity. That is, the relationship to one's neighbor. This essay will discuss the scope and breadth of the term neighbor as understood within the Islamic context, using the Qur'an and *ahadith*. It will then go on to analyze the Promised Messiah's^{as} call for peace in a modern, multicultural world, and how our treatment of our neighbors can either enable the existence of a peaceful paradise, or cause any Garden of Eden to fall from grace.

The Holy Qur'an states:

‘And worship Allah and associate naught with Him, and show kindness to parents, and to kindred, and orphans, and the needy, and to the neighbor that is a kinsman and the neighbor that is a stranger,’ (4:37).²

The apparent meaning is clear to all. Muslims are required to show kindness and regard to all stated relations. However, Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad's^{ra} commentary on the Qur'an offers a greater depth of field into its meaning of this verse. He writes that the verse preceding the one stated above, i.e. verse 36 of chapter 4 commands believers to be kind to their wives.³ Verse 36 is then followed by the above verse. This progression, he writes, from the most intimate of relations i.e. one's spouse, to the most aloof of relations i.e. *the neighbor that is a stranger* is indicative not of a neighbor in the usual sense, but of a neighbour in humanity. He writes:

“After having enjoined in the previous verses that one should be kind to one's wife, in the present verse the Qur'an directs a Muslim to make his kindness so comprehensive as to include in its scope the whole of mankind, from parents who are the nearest, to strangers who are the furthest removed.”⁴

Indeed, taking care of one's nearby neighbors would foster and develop a healthy sense of community within neighborhoods, which in turn would facilitate an open, safe, and positive environment, wherein persons would look out for one another and care for one another. But the latter part of the verse, “the neighbor that is a stranger” broadens the scope of the mean-

ing of neighbor. That is, the word does not only apply to people living in one's proximity. Instead, the word is used broadly and only one's imagination and heart can impose a limit on the breadth of its meaning. For example, considering the global community in which we live and the information age which has facilitated communications between major cosmopolitan states and underdeveloped backwaters worldwide, is it not possible that the injunction regarding *neighbors who are strangers* applies to persons whom we have never met, nor will we ever meet, but whom we have the power to help by means of our wealth, knowledge, and relative political strength? And if, as citizens of nation-states, we considered neighboring nation-states as those who fall into the sphere of this far-reaching injunction, could we not envision a global community in the true sense of the word, wherein we are obligated to provide for and support one another rather than undercut one another for resources in the name of power and politics? If this injunction could be applied in its true sense at both the micro and macro levels, is it not possible, even likely, that the Qur'anic vision of brotherhood between all mankind could be fulfilled? Indeed. If the Islamic scope of the word neighbor could be understood and effectively applied in its true spirit, then peace could be achieved, both within nations and between nations. Thus, the Islamic commandment of kindness to neighbors is limited neither by proximity nor by acquaintance, but bears the purpose of bringing together people from all walks of life and all across the globe, beneath the cloak of mutual mercy and kindness.

Such mutual mercy and kindness is apparent in the example of Prophet Muhammad^{sa}. The Holy Prophet^{sa} always practised utmost kindness and consideration towards all people, even towards his enemies. He fulfilled all the obligations due from him towards all his relations, whether they were personal or otherwise. In regards to neighbors, there are several *ahadith* which underscore their entitlement to respect and kindness. For example,

"Help your neighbour, if he seeks help; give him a loan if he asks for a loan; give him relief if he is needy; nurse him if he falls ill; follow his coffin if he dies; cheer him if he meets any good; sympathise with him if any calamity befalls him; raise not your building so as to deprive him of air without his permission; harass him not." (Kamil Ibne Adi)

The Prophet, sallallaahu `alayhi wa sallam, said:
"Jibreel (Gabriel) kept on commending the neighbor to me until I thought he would make him an heir."
 (Al-Bukhaari and Muslim)

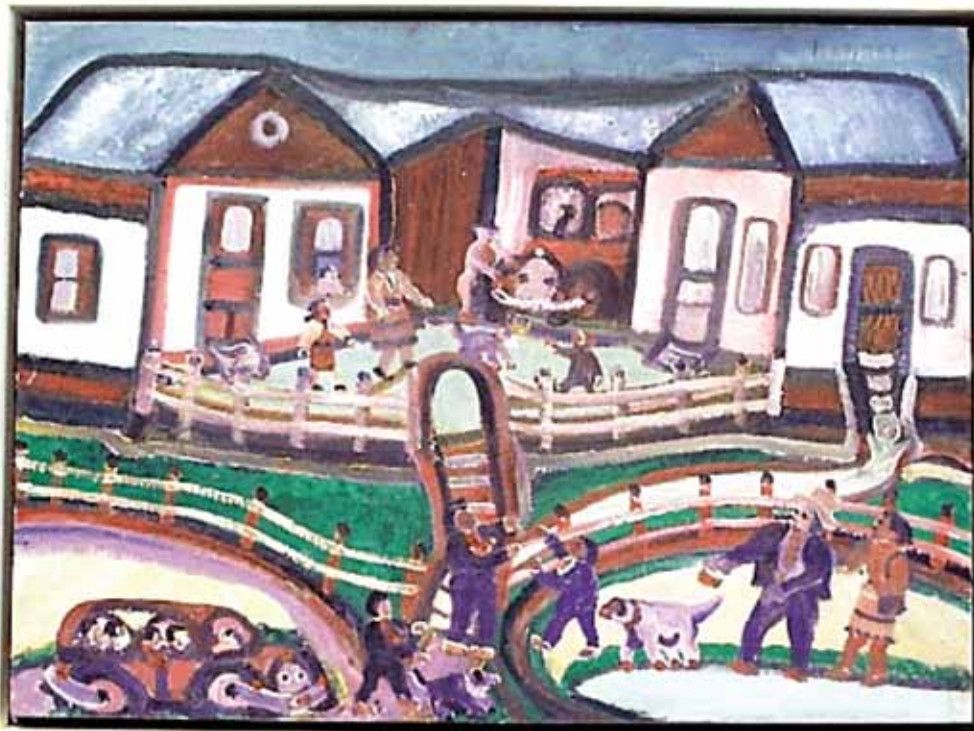


"One whose neighbor is not safe at his hands shall not enter Paradise." (Muslim)

These *ahadith*, while seemingly self-explanatory, offer a great insight into the Islamic philosophy of establishing and maintaining social peace. Islam relies on a form of social justice that is achieved not necessarily through the force of law, but through the incentives

and checks produced by mutual conduct and espouses the highest standard of social justice and cohesion not through mere theoretical discourse, but by placing the burden of action upon believers. Muslims are told that paradise can be achieved on earth if they behave with compassion and justice with one another. The above *ahadith*, if analyzed in light of Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad's^{ra} interpretation of the previously stated Qu'ranic

verse, further underscore the beautiful Islamic teachings regarding one's local community and one's general relation to humanity. A neighbor is to be offered protection and support in his time of need, his rights are not to be violated under any circumstance, even if any such violation should be beneficial to a believer ("raise not your building to deprive him of air without his permission"), he is not to be terrorized and whether in good health or bad, he is to be offered a strong support from a believer. Now consider, that if one was truly to act upon these injunctions, if each individual were to do so, would this not foster a general sense of peace, within persons, and amongst community members? Indeed—it would in fact be a paradise. Without having experienced blooming gardens, nor the luxury of a land flowing with abundance, nor having known the Descent of God's Presence on planet earth, humanity would achieve a veritable paradise on earth. Thus, Islam's emphasis on social justice is implemented by believers' behavior towards others and Islam imbues this behaviour within its followers in a pervasive manner beyond the sphere of any specific group, such as family or religion by demanding of Muslims the most noble of conduct towards one's neighbor, with no reference to nor question of his belief, his status, his creed and according to Hadrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad^{ra}, not even in reference to his proximity to ourselves. How beautifully Islam teaches its followers, through its teachings of the rights of neighbors: Love for All, Hatred for None.



A neighbor is to be offered protection and support in his time of need, his rights are not to be violated under any circumstance, even if any such violation should be beneficial to a believer.

To understand the value and significance of a thing, sometimes it is important to understand what it is not. Or in the case of social theories, to understand the significance of a specific sociological phenomenon or condition, the consequences of its absence must be considered. The Promised Messiah^{as} sends a

message of peace to his fellow people of India in his book, "A Message of Peace." He highlights the importance of living peacefully with one another regardless of religious differences and in fact not only guides his followers to tolerate religious differences, but also stresses upholding them to the utmost⁵. Thus he argues, that by giving the recognition, respect and stature due to the beliefs of others, on the basis that all faiths emerge from the One True God, a society can flourish in peace and prosperity.⁶ Now, consider the consequences of the absence of such respect and recognition. Pakistan is a glaring case in point.

For, is not Pakistan far from the paradise

that our parents once remembered it to be, for its clergy espouses neither neighborly relations nor justice nor compassion, but instead espouses hatred and division between the masses on account of the very religion that first forbade them from creating disorder in the earth? Instead of encouraging neighbors

to care for neighbors, they promote discord and ask citizens to harm their fellow citizens. While it began contained within the small circle of a certain citizenry, this discord has come to encompass the whole nation in its grip. It is no small tragedy that Pakistanis have failed to abide by the teachings of the Promised Messiah^{as}, but it is an even greater tragedy that while Prophet Muhammad^{saw} and his disciple the Promised Messiah^{as} both aspired towards an inter-religious community defined by a nature of most noble intent, the people of Pakistan use that very same religion to sow the seeds of destruction. Thus it is that when one fails to fulfil

the commandment of Allah, particularly in terms of the rights of neighbors, does peace leave the land, and social cohesion becomes a thing of the past. And when this disease of the denial of the rights of neighbors becomes a nation-wide plague, do the people of an Eden fall from grace, as they have in Pakistan. ♦

Endnotes

¹ Armstrong, Karen. Islam: A Brief History. Modern Library: United States, 2002, p. 24.

² The Holy Quran. Islam International Publications Limited. UK: 2002, chapter 4, verse 37.

³ Ibid., verse 36.

⁴ Ibid., p. 196

⁵ Ahmad, Hadrat Mirza Ghulam. A Message of Peace. UK: 2007.

⁶ Ibid.

A Message of Moderation in the Life of the Prophet of Islam

“And thus have We made you an exalted nation, that you may be guardians over men, and the Messenger of God may be a guardian over you” (2:144)



By Naeem Ahmad Rathore

The Promised Messiah ^{AS} says in the *Malfoozat* that this Blessed Community has been guided to the Middle Way. In the Torah God has emphasized retribution, while the *Injeel* or Gospels focus on love and forgiveness. But in this verse Allah makes it known to us that we are set on path of moderation and a balanced and appropriate response. So blessed are those who follow the Middle Course. He then quotes the well-known hadith or tradition: Moderation is the best course of action.

This verse, therefore, lays down the principle that the Islamic *Ummah* has been raised by Allah *tabarak-wa-taalaa* as the community that keeps an equitable balance between extremes and that the Muslims will show to the succeeding generations the path of moderation by their conduct, following the example set by our master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad, upon whom and his people be the Blessings and Mercy of God.

In studying the blessed life of the Holy Prophet ^{SA} we see a continuous thread links the public, private and devotional aspects of his fulfilling his mission, and that thread is the middle path, the way of gentleness, compassion, and moderation.

Ayesha ^{RA} relates that whenever the Holy Prophet ^{SA} was given a choice he adopted the easier course, unless it was sinful in which case he avoided it more than anyone else. Nor did he ever seek revenge for a personal wrong unless it involved violation of a Divine command in which case he exacted a penalty for the sake of Allah. (Bukhari & Muslim)

Before the advent of prophethood, he had the well-earned reputation of being a truthful and trustworthy person, and the go-to person to seek help for the needy, the orphan, and the widow; for redress for the victimized, for the resolution of disputes and avoidance of violence. We have the testimony of his wife, Khadija^{RA}, who comforted him upon his dis-

tress following the first revelation from God, by praising his high moral character.

In the early years of his mission the Holy Prophet ^{SA} suffered at the hands of those who had been his friends and neighbors, he witnessed the bad treatment of believers by their families and their masters. He sustained abuse and physical injury; but he remained steadfast and focused on his mission, praying constantly and seeking God's help and protection. He never retaliated or enticed his followers to acts of civil disorder, always counseling patience and fortitude. Indeed Abdul Rahman bin Auf ^{RA} and some other Muslims came to him and submitted: "Messenger of God, when we were pagans we were respected and no one dared to raise hostile eyes at us. But since we have become Muslims, we have become weak and helpless and are held of no account. We have to endure the persecutions of the unbelievers in humility. We beg you to permit us to stand up to them." To this he replied: "I have been commanded to forbear. I cannot permit you to fight your enemies." With this they had to be content and to endure all persecution steadfastly.

On his missionary visit to Taif, the other great city of Arabia of that time, he was faced with utter rejection by the notables of the city and was set upon by street urchins who pelted him and his companion Zaid^{RA}, with stones. It is related in several *Ahadith* that an angel appeared to him with the message that if the

Holy Prophet^{sa} so wished; the angel will press down upon the city two great mountains. The Holy Prophet^{sa} answered him: Indeed not, I am hoping that God will make out of their children such as would worship Him, the One, not associating any with Him. After the Battle of Hunain, the Holy Prophet^{sa} pursued the Thaaqif tribe as they retreated and secured themselves in their city, Taif. He laid siege to Taif, but owing to other pressing circumstances, he raised the siege after three weeks, and ordered that no punitive measures like cutting down of trees, poisoning of wells etc; be taken. Nor, when asked by some of his followers, would he put a curse on the unbelieving inhabitants saying that he was sent as a mercy to mankind and not to put a curse upon them. After many negotiations with a succession of city leaders, indeed by the conversion to Islam of many of the inhabitants, Taif surrendered to his authority next year without any further bloodshed.

It was this policy of moderation that eventually prevailed upon both these cities and it endured the test of time. When during the Khilafat of Abu Bakr^{ra}, most of the Bedouin tribes reneged on their obligations and went back to the practices of days of ignorance and when Musaylimah the Arch Liar and Abu Aswad Ansi claimed prophethood and raised a large horde of disaffected nomads; Abu Bakr^{ra} brooked no compromise and boldly defended the *Ummah*. This was only possible as both the great cities of Taif and Mecca remained loyal to the Muslim State and kept their faith in God and His Messenger^{sa}.

The Holy Prophet^{sa} practiced and propagated moderation in all walks of life. Abdullah bin Umar^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: Moderation in spending is half the art of living; friendliness and cheerful conduct is half the art of wisdom; the right method of inquiry or properly framing a question is half the art of learning. In another version he said: Moderation is half of happiness and good behavior is half of faith. (*Tirmidhi*)

Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: Love your friend in moderation, as it is quite possible that he may become your enemy. Similarly, moderate your bad feelings towards your opponent as later he may become your ally. (*Tabraani*)

Anas^{ra} relates that three persons inquired from the wives of the Holy Prophet^{sa} about his practice in the matter of worship. When they

were told, they felt it would not be enough in their case and said: there is no comparison between us and the Holy Prophet^{sa}. He has been forgiven in advance. One of them said: I shall always spend the whole night in voluntary prayer. The second announced: I shall observe a fast every day without interruption. The third said: I shall keep away from women and shall never marry. The Holy Prophet^{sa} arrived and said: Did you say this? Now I fear God more than you do, and am more mindful of my duty than you are, but I observe fast and also abstain from fasting; and I perform voluntary prayers at night and also sleep, and I consort with my wives. He who turns away from my practice is not of me. (*Muslim*)

Abu Hurairah^{ra} relates that a rustic, a nomadic Bedouin, urinated in the mosque. Several people got up to rough handle him. Whereupon the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: Let go of him and pour a bucket of water over it to wash it out. You have been raised to make things easy and not to make them hard. For the visiting delegation of the Christians of Najaran, he made his mosque available for their religious service.

The prime example of the Holy Prophet's moderation is the negotiations that led to the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah. The Holy Prophet^{sa} and a few hundred companions, armed only with personal weapons had proceeded to Mecca for the annual pilgrimage during the sacred month as was their right under the ancient custom of Arabia. The Quraish of Mecca saw this as an affront to their supremacy in matters pertaining to the Holy City and would not allow it. After lengthy diplomatic parleys an agreement was reached and a peace treaty was concluded that seemed to favor the Meccans, inasmuch that the Muslims will not be allowed to perform the pilgrimage that year but may return next year and stay for only three days and they will not take anyone, a relative or a fellow a Muslim back with them; that the fugitives from Mecca would be returned but a Muslim found in Mecca may be detained and other matters that to many Muslims, including Umar^{ra}, seemed humiliating. But the Holy Qur'an called this the Great and Evident Victory. As the treaty engendered peace and opened communications so that the people were able to calmly study and appreciate the blissful and satisfying message of the Unity of God and merciful teachings for a moral

and happy life.

The opponents of Islam throughout the ages have made much of the defensive wars that the Holy Prophet^{sa} engaged in during his life time. Many, including some Muslims believe that Islam was spread by the sword. Mirza Bashir Ahmad^{ra} in his book *Seerat Khatam-un-Nabiyyeen*: draws an interesting conclusion from the reported numbers of Muslim warriors in these battles. There were 313 Muslims at Badr; about 700 at Uhud a year later; there were about 3,000 total number of defenders at the Battle of the Ditch in the fifth year of *Hijrah*. 1,500 believers accompanied the Holy Prophet^{sa} to Hudaibiyyah next year. But 10,000 was the strength of the host that was with the Holy Prophet^{sa} two years later for the Conquest of Mecca. One may appreciate that while there has been only incremental progress in the number of converts when hostilities were continuing, but there was a dramatic shift in the Muslim population after only two years of peace.

Moderation is not an exercise in being mediocre or in finding a dull compromise or an avoidance of difficult choices. It is a conscious and sustained effort, in light of God's guidance, in finding the most suitable, proportionate and fair response to all issues. When the Prophet^{sa} appointed Muadh bin Jabal^{ra} as Governor of Yemen, he asked him, "How will you judge?" Muadh replied "I will act according to the Book of Allah."

"But what if you do not find it in the Book of Allah?"

"Then I shall decide by the *sunnah* or the practice of the Messenger of Allah."

The Prophet^{sa} persisted: "But if you find no precedence in my *sunnah*?"

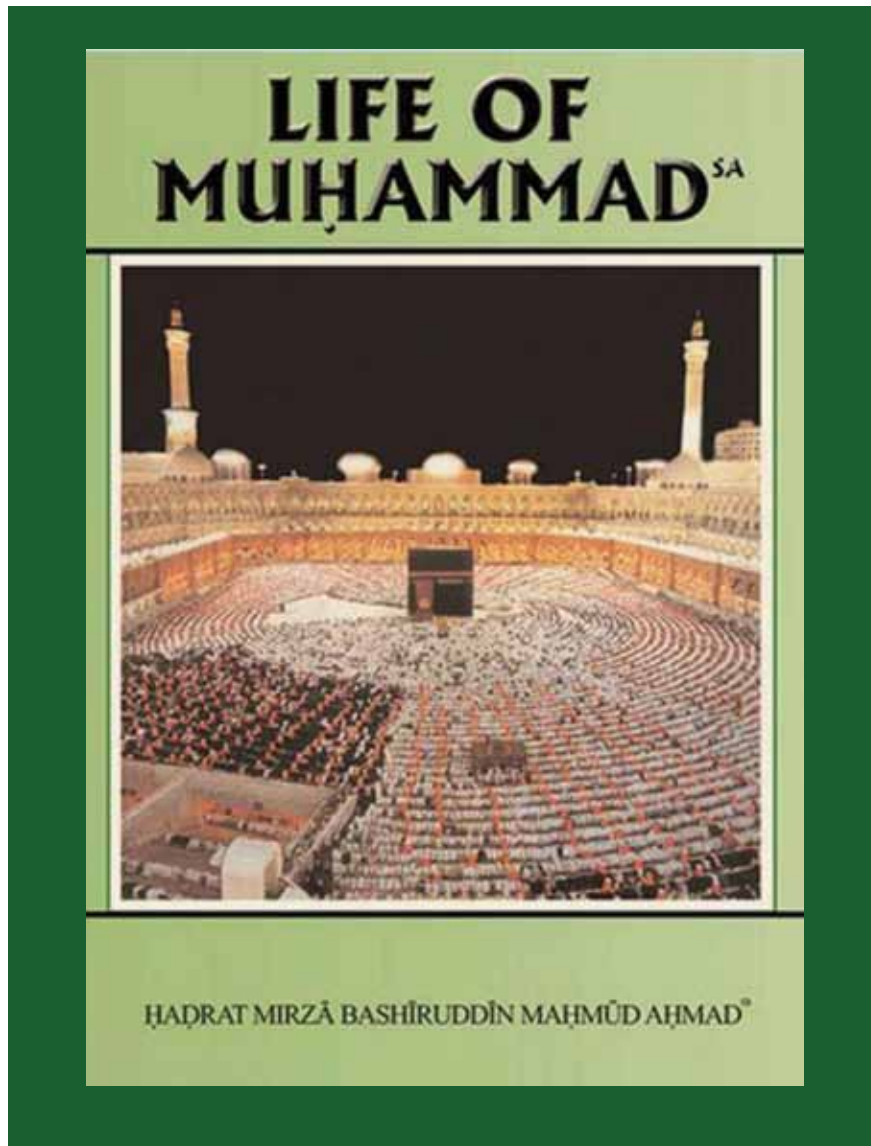
"Then I shall use my reason."

The Prophet^{sa} said: God be praised Who has enabled the agent of His messenger with such wisdom. (*Tirmidhi*)

Ayesha^{ra} relates that the Holy Prophet^{sa} said: "Take on those practices that you have the capacity to sustain. God does not grow weary unless you do" (*Bukhari & Muslim*).

And finally, also from Hadrat Ayesha^{ra}, the Holy Prophet^{sa} is reported to have said: "Avoid the infliction of prescribed penalties as much as you can, if there is any way out, let a man go; for it is better for a leader to make a mistake in forgiving than to make a mistake in punishing" (*Tirmidhi*)◆

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Devotion to Islam and the Holy Prophet^{sa}

By Hazrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian^{as}
The Promised Messiah and Mahdi, Published in 1893
Translated by Shazia Sohail

*We have exhausted all avenues of reason
Comparable to Muhammad's we found no religion.*

*No other faith is supported by signs
We only ate this fruit in the garden of Muhammad.*

*We have, ourselves, put Islam to a test
Wake up and see, "It is pure light" we attest.*

*We examined other faiths but found no glow
Anyone may offer proof if the truth we obscure.*

*We are weary, having made the same assertions
Casting arrows of appeal in all directions.*

*We summoned our opponents to a contest
But none came forward to meet the test.*

*Wrapped up in the quilt of ignorance, they are asleep
They do not awaken, we have tried endlessly.*

*They are tormented by malice and spite
They do not desist, though often we remind.*

*Come, O People! You'll find Divine Light here only!
Look, we have shown you the means of relief.*

*Ever since the Prophet's radiance has enlightened us
With the True and the Just we have merged ourselves.*

*Your limitless peace and mercy on Mustafa¹ we invoke
We received this light from him, O Lord.*

*My life is eternally devoted to Muhammad's
My heart liberally drank from that chalice.*

*I found none better than him in the world
Naturally, my heart withdrew from all other.*

The chosen one

*In the eyes of outsiders I am worthy of wrath
For I am devoted to him from the depths of my heart.*

*My claim of being the Messiah, in their opinion
Is a slur that I invented all on my own.*

*They call me infidel, heretic, and heathen
Many names I have earned in my nation's concern.*

*I pray for these people when I hear insults
My compassion is fervent, and anger reduced.*

*My dear Ahmad^{sa}, I swear by your countenance
I have carried this burden with your assistance.*

*Every cell in my being with your love is suffused
Settled in my heart are emotions profuse.*

*The enemy's procession, with logic, we did defeat
The duty of the sword, with our pen, we did achieve.*

*As we revealed your luster, all were shamed and contrite
With the fire of anguish every heart was alight.*

*With your love, our Self, we did obliterate
We scattered ourselves, like dust, in your way.*

*A refuge for the world we found in your tavern
We imbibed, a hundred times, the intoxicating wine.*

*We see the grandeur of Truth in your attributes
We found That Being by first finding you.*

*The touch of your mantle saves us from every ambush
We bowed our head at your door of course.*

*O Beloved! I swear by your uniqueness
I have lost myself in your affection.*

*By God, all trace of others are gone from my heart
Ever since I affixed your image in my heart.*

*A stunning array of light we saw, when you we discerned
With your blaze all evil desires were burned.*

*We're the best of nations because of you, O chief Prophet
Your progress encouraged us to step forward.*

*Not just mankind, but all the angels too
Sing your praises just as we do.*

*Having suffered the injustice of my nation today
I am wailing at your door, my beloved, dismayed.*

Khalifa of Islam makes historic address at European Parliament

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad calls for peace through unity



On 4 December 2012, the World Head of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat and Fifth Khalifa, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad delivered an historic keynote address at the European Parliament in Brussels to a packed audience of more than 350 guests representing 30 countries.

The event was hosted by the newly launched 'European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group', whose Chair and Vice-Chairs all took to the stage to

welcome Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad. Martin Schulz MEP and President of the European Parliament also came to meet with His Holiness.

During his thirty-five minute address, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad called on the European Union to preserve its unity; addressed the issue of increased immigration to Western countries; advocated for equality in international relations and spoke at length about Islam's key teachings in relation to developing world peace.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said that in the modern world many people viewed Islam as a religion that promoted violence and extremism and blamed it for many of the conflicts taking place in various parts of the world. He said that such allegations were particularly unjust given that "the very meanings of the word Islam are 'peace' and 'security'."

The Khalifa spoke about widespread concerns over increasing levels of immigration to Western countries.

In a detailed analysis, His Holiness said

the issue was leading to the spread of 'restlessness and anxiety'. His Holiness blamed both the immigrants and the indigenous people for the state of conflict, whereby many immigrants provoked locals by refusing to integrate, whilst certain segments of the local society were intolerant to outsiders. He said the consequences of such division were far reaching and so he called on all parties to work together to resolve the issues.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"Governments need to make policies that establish and protect mutual respect, through which hurting the sentiments of others or causing them any type of harm should be outlawed. With regard the immigrants, they must enter with a willingness to integrate with the local people, whilst the locals should be ready to open their hearts and display tolerance."

About the European Union, Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"The formation of the European Union has been a great achievement on the part of



What I wish to say is that all forms of cruelty, wherever they exist, must be eradicated and stopped, regardless of whether they are perpetrated by the people of Palestine, the people of Israel or the people of any other country. -- Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad, Khalifatul Masih V

the European countries, for it has been a means of uniting this Continent. And so you should make all possible efforts to preserve this unity... Remember that the strength of Europe lies in it remaining united and together as one. Such unity will not only benefit you here in Europe but at a global level will be the means for this Continent to maintain its strength and influence."

The Khalifa spoke of the need not just for co-operation within Europe, but called for global unity. His Holiness said:

"Speaking from an Islamic perspective, we should strive for the entire world to unite together. In terms of currency the world should be united. In terms of business and trade the world should be united. And in terms of freedom of movement and immigration, cohesive and practical policies should be developed, so that the world can become united."

The Khalifa said that in the modern world countries could no longer afford to remain isolated and even global powers like the United States were dependent on international trade and foreign relations.

He said developed countries ought not to exploit weaker nations but should seek to help them develop and succeed.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad also spoke about conflicts in the Arab World and Middle East. He said that whilst the Western world had openly expressed 'outrage and concern' at the situations in Syria and Libya, they did not seem as concerned about the plight of the Palestinian people.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad said:

"This perceived double standard is causing grievances and malice to increase in

the hearts of people from Muslim countries against the major powers of the world. This anger and animosity is extremely dangerous and could boil over and explode at any time...

Let it be clear that I am not speaking in support or favour of any particular individual country. What I wish to say is that all forms of cruelty, wherever they exist, must be eradicated and stopped, regardless of whether they are perpetrated by the people of Palestine, the people of Israel or the people of any other country."

The Khalifa also criticised the principle of veto power within international institutions. He said that the voting history of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council showed that on certain occasions veto powers had been misused to assist cruelty, rather than to prevent it.

Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad concluded by calling for justice and equality. He said:

"Always remember that peace can only be established by helping both the oppressed and the oppressor in a manner that is completely impartial, free from vested interests and devoid of all enmity. Peace is made by giving all parties an equal platform and playing field."

Before the keynote address a number of MEPs took to the stage and spoke of their admiration of peaceful Islam as advocated by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat.

Dr Charles Tannock MEP, Chair of the European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group, said 'Ahmadi Muslims are a welcome example of tolerance in the world.' He condemned the persecution of Ahmadi Muslims in Pakistan and said 'the Ahmadi

motto of Love for All, Hatred for None is a welcome antidote to the extremist Jihadists'.

Tunne Kelam MEP, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group, said he was attending the event because it was an opportunity to 'join in an aspiration for peace'. He praised the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat for 'rejecting all violence and terrorism' and pledged to support the Jamaat globally.

Baroness Sarah Ludford MEP, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group, spoke of her long term relationship with the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in the United Kingdom. She said that the Jamaat's motto was 'an inspiration which we desperately need in the modern world.'

Claude Moraes MEP, Vice-Chair of the European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group, said the event had 'attracted a bigger turnout than we get to any meetings at the European Parliament'.

Jean Lambert MEP, Chair of European Parliament's South Asia Delegation, said that she would pursue with the Pakistani Government the issue of Ahmadi Muslim voting rights. She said it was necessary that all parties had the right to vote freely and without discrimination.

The President of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat in the United Kingdom, Rafiq Hayat, also took to the stage to express his pleasure that the 'European Parliament Friends of Ahmadiyya Muslims Group' had been launched.

The historic event concluded at 4.35pm with a silent prayer led by Hadhrat Mirza Masroor Ahmad.

Questions & Answers

What was the condition of Arabs at the time the Holy Prophet^{sa} was raised?

Our lord and master, the Holy Prophet, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, was raised at a time when the world had been thoroughly corrupted. As God Almighty has said:

Corruption has spread over land and sea (30:42). This means that the people of the book, as well as those who had no experience of revelation, had all been corrupted. The purpose of the Holy Quran was to revive the dead, as is said:

Know that Allah is about to revive the earth after its death (57:18). At that time the people of Arabia were steeped in barbarism. No social pattern prevailed and they took pride in every type of sin and misconduct. A man married an unlimited number of wives, and they were all addicted to the use of everything unlawful. They considered it lawful to marry their mothers, and that is why God Almighty had to prescribe:

Your mothers are made unlawful for you (4:24). They ate carrion and some of them wore even cannibals. There is not a sin that they were not guilty of. Most of them did not believe in the after life. Many of them denied the existence of God. They killed their female infants with their own hands. They killed orphans and devoured their substance. They had the appearance of human beings but were bereft of reason. They possessed no modesty, no shame, and no self respect. They drank liquor like water. The one among them who indulged indiscriminately in fornication was acknowledged as the chief of his tribe. They were so utterly ignorant that their neighbouring people called them the unlettered ones. At such time and for the reform of such people, our lord and master, the Holy Prophet^{sa} appeared in Mecca. This was the time that called for the three types of reform that we have just mentioned. That is why the Holy Quran claims to be more complete and more perfect

than all other books of guidance, inasmuch as the other books had not the opportunity of carrying out the three types of reforms which the Holy Quran was designed to carry out. The purpose of the Holy Quran was to elevate savages into men, and then to equip them with moral qualities, and finally raise them to the level of godly persons. The Holy Quran thus comprehends all those three projects.

Why was the Holy Prophet^{sa} raised in Arabia?

That the last Divine guidance should shine forth from Arabia was determined by Divine wisdom. The Arabs are descended from Ishmael who was cut asunder from Israel and had, under Divine wisdom, been cast into the wilderness of Paran (Faran), which means two fugitives. The descendants of Ishmael had been cut asunder from Bani Israel by Abraham himself and they had no part in the law of the Torah, as was written that they would not inherit from Isaac.

Thus they were abandoned by those to whom they belonged and had no relationship with anyone else. In all other countries there were some traces of worship and commandments which indicated that they had at one time received instruction from prophets. Arabia alone was a country that was utterly unacquainted with such teachings and was the most backward of all. Its turn came last of all and it received the benefit of a universal prophethood, so that all countries might share again in the blessings of prophethood, and the errors that had become current in the meantime among them might be weeded out.

What kind of example did the Holy Prophet^{sa} set during the first phase of his life?

During the period of trials in Mecca, which extended over thirteen years, the Holy Prophet^{sa}, peace and blessings of Allah be upon him, demonstrated in practice all the high qualities which a perfectly righteous person should exhibit at such a time, such as trust in God, perfect serenity under sufferings, steady and eager carrying out of duties and fearless courage. Observing his steadfastness many of the disbelievers believed in him

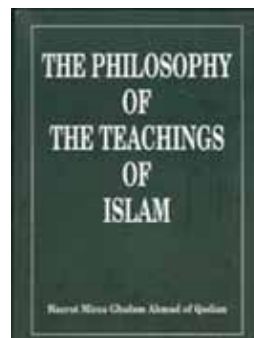
and thus testified that it is only one who has complete trust in God who can display such steadfastness and endurance of suffering.

What kind of example did the Holy Prophet^{sa} set during the second phase of his life?

During the second phase, that is to say the phase of victory, authority and prosperity, he demonstrated such high qualities as forbearance, forgiveness, benevolence, and courage, so that a large number of the disbelievers in him through witnessing his exercise of those high qualities. He forgave those who had persecuted him, granted security to those who had expelled him from Mecca, bestowed great wealth upon those among them who were in need and have obtained authority over his bitter enemies, forgave them all. Witnessing his high morals many of them testified that such qualities could only be demonstrated by one who comes from God and is truly righteous.

How did the Holy Prophet^{sa} display high moral standards in his life?

There is no high moral quality for the exercise of which God Almighty did not afford him an opportunity. All excellent moral qualities like bravery, generosity, steadfastness, forbearance, meekness, etc., were in his case so clearly established that it is not possible to seek his equal. It is also true that those who had carried their persecution of him to the extreme and had designed the destruction of Islam, were not left unpunished by God. To forgo chastisement in their case would have amounted to the destruction of the righteous under the heels of their enemies.



For further discussion on these topics go to Alislam.org. Search under library for the book, "The Philosophy of the Teachings of Islam."

Reflections on Hurricane Sandy

Humanity First volunteers in the New York areas were also impacted by the hurricane, they stood by the noble principle of putting the needs of others before their own.

In fulfillment of the 9th condition of our *Bay'ah* (i.e., *Oath of Allegiance* [to the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community]), we pledge to do our best to care for our fellow human beings. Presently under the divine leadership of Hadrat Khalifat-ul-Masih V, Mirza Masroor Ahmad^{aba}, Humanity First USA is not only serving our fellow Americans through education, food banks and disaster relief programs, but also serving the needs of deserving fellow human beings through its international programs.

In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Humanity First volunteers are continuing to work hard to alleviate the suffering of the affected communities. We all have witnessed the magnitude of the impact, either first-hand or through the media. The hurricane has claimed over more than 100 lives and the damage is estimated in the tens of billions of dollars. The shores of New York and New Jersey were hit the hardest by the hurricane on last October causing floods, fires and leaving millions of residents without power and the basic ne



In the wake of Hurricane Sandy, Humanity First volunteers continued to work hard to alleviate the suffering of the affected communities. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community.



Humanity First recruited more than 100 volunteers, who contributed thousands of hours to clean up houses of people affected by this storm in Queens, Staten Island, Long Beach, Long Island and Southern New Jersey. Relief and full recovery efforts not only take time, but enormous financial resources were needed in the relief effort.

cessities of life for weeks and months to come. Despite the fact that our community members and Humanity First volunteers in the New York areas were also impacted by the hurricane, they stood by the noble principle of putting the needs of others before their own, and started helping their communities with relief efforts.

At the moment, Humanity First volunteers in collaboration with Ahmadiyya Muslim Community provided relief to the affected communities through distribution of supplies and supporting shelters where displaced people are residing. Over 100 volunteers contributed thousands of hours to clean up houses of people affected by this storm in Queens, Staten Island, Long Beach, Long Island and Southern New Jersey. Relief and full recovery efforts will not only take time, but enormous financial resources. For detailed review of our activities, please visit our website at www.usa.humanityfirst.org

We request the members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community to contribute generously towards the **“Disaster Relief Fund”**

of Humanity First so that Humanity First can better serve our fellow citizens, both locally and globally, at times of dire need. It is very important that all *Jama’at* members must not only participate in these efforts, but also spread awareness regarding the noble cause of Humanity First.

Ever since Hurricane Sandy devastated the East Coast of the United States, volunteers from Humanity First USA have been working continuously to help rebuild the devastated communities.

According to a Humanity First press release, more than 3,700 individuals have received warm meals, supplies have been distributed to hundreds of homes and more than 50 houses have been provided with major and much needed clean up assistance through Humanity First.

The Humanity First disaster relief team was primarily based out of the command center in Queens, New York, the press release said.

“[The team] was working in some of the hardest hit areas, including Jersey Shore,

Lower Manhattan, Howard Beach, Staten Island, and Breezy Point,” the organization said. “Humanity First leadership has been meeting with local authorities and other organizations nearly every day in both New York and New Jersey to efficiently provide their services.”

Dozens of volunteers traveled from across the States and Canada to join Humanity First in providing clean-up, donations, warm meals, and other basic supplies to thousands of victims.

Among the many recent efforts, more than 80 Humanity First volunteers assisted New Jersey Senator Diane Allen with a project to distribute more than 30 tons of food in impacted communities near Manahawkin, New Jersey.

“We may think that hurricane is over and life is back to normal, but the reality is that there are thousands of people out there whose lives are still not back to normal,” a Humanity First volunteer from New Jersey stated. “...and it will be a long time until they are.”

“We cannot and should not forget them.”

Religion has been a vital factor in the lives of all races and a potent force in the construction of all civilizations. Science has discovered some form of worship among even the most primitive tribes of people. Asia has not only been the cradle of the world's earliest known civilizations, but it has also fostered the three great religions of the modern world, namely, Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Muhammad brought his message to the Arabians when the country was steeped in vice and lawlessness. He was stoned, maligned and forced to flee for his life, yet he never faltered in his purpose. During his lifetime, many of his enemies and his scoffing countrymen urged him to perform some miracle, or so gratify his unbelieving

Many of his critics maintained that the Quran was not an inspired book, but that Muhammad has written it during the time that he was fasting and praying in seclusion, but according to the Moslem belief, it is a literally inspired book of God.

Muhammad was often subjected to severe criticism, because he had no group of ascetics similar to that of the Christian monks, but he constantly asserted that the Moslem life was the married life and the Quran did not sanction a life of celibacy. Except during the month of Ramadhan, he also forbade continuous fasting which causes the body to deteriorate for he maintained that onw could do God's work better if he were in good health.

Popular conceptions in the West about the Moslem women are absolutely baseless, for instance that Muhammad taught or that Moslems believe that women have no souls, or that there are no women in Paradise. In the Quran, no distinction is made between the religious obligations which are incumbent upon the women and those prescribed for men.

The prophet gave the women the right of inheritance, the right to enjoy the pilgrimage to Mecca, and he urged women as well as men to study the religious sciences and there have been many women who have not only been known for their great knowledge of the branches of the Moslem science, but their signatures were actually sought on the diplomas of some of the best known scholars.



Let's follow a peaceful prophet

By Zahir Muhammad Mannan



The recent film “Innocence of Muslims” which sparked riots and protests around the Muslim world was not the worst or last deranged attempt to ignite unjust hatred.

Indeed, since Prophet Muhammad’s birth to a beautiful couple named Aminah and Abdullah, the meek, poor, unlettered orphan of Arabia’s desert has tearfully been the target of repeated physical and character assassinations! But what, some ask, can anyone have against he who humbly served both Creator and creation, while being hailed as the harbinger of loving peace and merciful justice? We could ask the same question about his predecessor; the blessed Messiah Jesus, as we painfully recall his gruesome crucifixion. Or, our noble Patriarch Abraham, when Nimrod savagely cast him into a fiery furnace.

The essential answer lies in this familiar quote; ‘these six doth the Lord hate: yea, seven an abomination into him: A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren’ (Proverbs 6:16-19). This is more commonly known as ‘seven deadly sins’.

So why did Muslims hastily erupt in violence? They should have trusted in the Qur’an, which declares; ‘Although they employ diverse tools senselessly to cause distress, chaos and fabricate plenty of calumnies; Grieve not, for you (Muhammad)

are most assuredly not, by the tender grace of your loving Lord, in delusion. And certainly for you is a wondrous fathomless reward, without limit, without end. And undoubtedly, you are the one who has conquered and possessed the loftiest moral excellences. And so it will soon come to pass that not only will you realize this but, eventually, everyone else will also behold in awe’ (Quran Ch. the Tool/ Pen 68:2-6)? The heart strengthening echo of this inspiring promise should have been enough to endure the persecution, which in some cases is ‘worse than killing’ (Quran Ch. The Cow 2:192).

As a member of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, I am pleased to convey our peacefully constructive reply mirrored in Prophet Muhammad’s brave example; ‘And why shouldn’t we trust in Allah leaving Him to judge when surely He alone is our Guide and our Way. And, verily, we shall bear patiently and transcend rising above whatever verbal, physical, and emotional harm you put us through’ (Quran Ch. Abraham 14:13).

In the same month the abhorrent video was publicized, Ahmadi Muslim Americans raised over 12,000 pints of blood in our nation-wide Muslims For Life campaign to honor 9/11 victims. We walked to raise half a million dollars to help feed hungry Americans during our Walk For Humanity effort. Had those Muslims who resorted to violence instead followed Prophet Muhammad’s outstanding example of patience and tolerance, their reputation—and more importantly Islam’s reputation—would have been saved, even restored.

American Ahmadi Muslims worked hard to exemplify the gentle beauty of our beloved spiritual teacher and father, Muhammad, and that of past Divine Messengers like Moses and Jesus. It is only by following their tolerant, flawless footsteps that we have achieved any success in service to humanity. So let’s all modestly follow Muhammad’s enlivening paradigm; when his enemies brought him down, he vanquished them but not with the sword. Rather, he won them over through benign forgiveness and loving service per the Qur’an’s guidance: ‘Repel evil with that which is best. And lo, the one between whom and thyself was enmity will become as warm friends’ (Quran Ch. The Prostration 41:35).

God’s reward and love be with you always from your humble servant.

Majority in Dutch parliament move to scrap law making it a crime to insult God

Associated Press

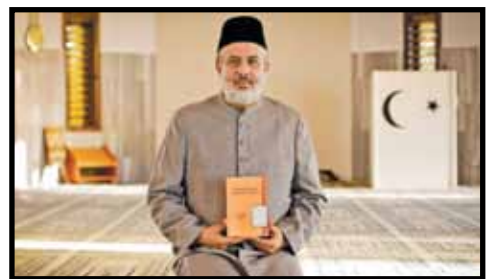
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AMSTERDAM – The Almighty will have to defend his own name from now on: Dutch parliament has accepted a motion that will scrap a law making it a crime to insult God.

A majority of parties said Wednesday the European Union nation no longer needs the law, which hasn’t been invoked in the past half-century.

The movement to decriminalize blasphemy gathered strength in the last decade amid a national debate about the limits of freedom of speech. The climax came at the 2011 trial of far-right politician Geert Wilders, when judges ruled he had the right to criticize Islam, even if his opinions were insulting to many Muslims.

Ahmadiyya Community observes 25 years since Qur’an translated into Yiddish



Members of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community, Israel, that translated parts of the Qur’an into Yiddish are marking 25 years since that translation was published. The president of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in Israel, Muhammad Sharif Odeh, said the group translated select parts of the Koran into Yiddish in order to present a different face of Islam. In addition, said Odeh, “We decided we had to make sure that our neighbors could also read the Koran.”

Ghana: Saluting Ahmadiyya Mission's Education Policy



Last month, the Ahmadiyya High School at Gomoa Postin held a Speech and Prize-Giving Day to mark 40 years of its establishment. According to Mr. Nazir A. Keelson, Headmaster of the School, P-Amass was founded in 1972 with a population of 17 students, made up of 13 boys and four girls. Today, P-Amass has a population of 2,150 students.

On Saturday, another second cycle institution, founded and run by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission also marked its 40th anniversary with a Speech and Prize-Giving Day. The

In fulfillment of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission's concept of Service to Humanity, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission has contributed in diverse ways towards the education of the country.

At the moment 1,600 students are preparing to face the future under the tutelage of Mr. Mohammed Ackonu, the headmaster and his over 100 teaching and non-teaching staff.

In fulfillment of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission's concept of Service to Humanity, the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission has contributed in diverse ways towards the education of the country.

When the early Ahmadiyya missionaries

has learned, is now operating a tertiary institution at Mankessim. The Ahmadiyya University College is certainly adding to tertiary education institutions in Ghana.

The Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission already runs a Missionary Training College at Ekumfi Ekrawfo, where students from 17 countries in West Africa and beyond are going through the rudiments that would qualify them to spread the word in their respective countries.

As pointed out by Mr. Charles Aheto Segah, Deputy Director-General of the Ghana Education Service, apart from offering opportunities to a large mass of rural dwellers, especially to educate their children, statistics at the Ghana Education Service, indicate that students of the various Ahmadiyya Schools were not prone to violence, obviously because of their strong moral training.

The Chronicle takes this opportunity to greet the Ameer and Missionary in Charge of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission, Maulvi Dr. Wahab Adam and his missionaries for their efforts at educating the Ghanaian child.

The first Ahmadiyya Basic School, the Ekumfi Ekrawfo Ahmadiyya Primary and Junior High Schools are over 100 years old, certainly as old as the presence of the mission in Ghana.

What make the contribution of the Ahmadiyya Muslim Mission to education in Ghana unique is their areas of operation. The mission's operations centre, around our rural communities, where parents have hardly enough to plough back into their children's education.

In other words, the mission has succeeded in bringing education to communities that would otherwise have been left behind in the effort to educate the Ghanaian. We hope and pray that Allah would continue to lead the mission to provide more opportunities for our disadvantaged

kids to improve on their education profile.

In the interim, The Chronicle salutes the mission on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of P-Amass and E-Amass. The two second cycle institutions have already paid their due to mother Ghana.



Ekumfi Ahmadiyya High School, popularly known as E-Amass, began in premises at Es-sarkyir, donated by Nana Akyin VI, deceased Omanhen of the Ekumfi Traditional Area.

E-Amass began with a total population of 24 students, which had 20 boys and four girls.

arrived in the country and began their evangelistic mission at Ekumfi Ekrawfo in the Central Region, there were no schools in the Ekumfi District and beyond.

Now Ahmadiyya basic schools are dotted all over the area. The mission, The Chronicle

Gunmen desecrate Ahmadi graves in Lahore

THE Friday Times
beta v 1.0

The Ahmadiyya cemetery in Lahore's Model Town is dead silent. Broken mud-ridden tombstones are scattered all over the graveyard. An old man weeps silently, trying to fix an uprooted tombstone bearing his father's name with trembling hands.

"After 35 years of serving this country, this is what I get." He is a retired government officer. His father had once fought for Pakistan's freedom.

According to witnesses, 12 armed men broke through the northern wall of the graveyard in the pre-dawn hours of December 3, beat up and tied the 70 year old gravedigger and his family, muttering "kafir" under their breaths. They proceeded to pull out chisels and hammers from a bag full of supplies and began destroying the graves. Two private security men of Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya suspected something amiss. One of them entered the cemetery through the main gate and was held hostage by the gunmen. After waiting for several minutes, the second security guard realized something was seriously wrong. He called rescue services and fired warning shots in the air. Perhaps not expecting this development, the vandals appeared to have panicked and fled, leaving behind their tools and bags. By that time, they had destroyed the entire western portion of the graveyard, one hundred of the oldest graves.

The guard pointed out a hammer left on top of an untouched grave, as if dropped mid-attempt. "They came with weapons, and I was scared," he said. "They could have killed us." The gunmen covered their faces, spoke Punjabi and only identified themselves as "the Taliban" according to those present.

An administrator of the Ahmadiyya Community, Mr Malik, questioned the security arrangements in the posh Model Town area. "This is virtually Nawaz Sharif's backyard. How did Kalashnikov wielding masked assailants manage to enter the premises without



"They were already after the living, now they are after the dead."

anyone noticing?" he asked. "We are residents of Model Town and we pay residential security bills each month. Why would no one come to help us?"

The raid represents the gradual demonization and ghettoization of the minority Ahmadiyya religious community. In 1980, four years after Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto declared Ahmadis as non-Muslims, an unceremonious wall was drawn up to divide the dead. The main Model Town graveyard is on the other side.

"My mother is buried in the other graveyard," Malik said. "I had to bury my father here, away from her, because we were not allowed to use that graveyard any longer." Just four years after that, General Zia's Ordinance 20 cemented that alienation. Although Article 298's clauses B and C prescribe a fine or up to three years imprisonment, it has cost Ahmadis their lives and their sense of belonging.

Asad Jamal, a prominent lawyer, is saddened that despite knowing the consequences of such Islamization of state policy on minorities, there has been no cohesive legislative debate in parliamentary, mainstream media and civil circles. "Any such statute in the legal framework is a clear invitation to people to take the law into their own hands," he said. "Why should the state become party to such friction?" The radicalization of major segments of society has him worried for his own future and that of his children. "They will reach their homes, you will see."

The December 3 attack also raises serious questions about local law enforcement mechanisms. According to documents provided by

Jamaat-e-Ahmadiyya administrative staff, an individual named Advocate Rana Muhammad Tufail, calling himself a member of the Khatam-e-Nabuwwat Lawyers Forum, filed a petition in the Sessions Court demanding action against the alleged inscription of verses of the Holy Quran on the tombstones in this graveyard. The court decreed the police to act strictly in accordance with the law in the matter. The police officers in-charge categorically told Malik, in the presence of several other people, "There is a lot of pressure on me. If you don't do anything, they will do it themselves."

A number of religious groups have been reported to be blatantly active in hate campaigns against the Ahmadiyya Community. Last month, an individual with links to the Khatam-e-Nabuwwat group was arrested in the Gulberg area for distributing hate literature, but released without pressing charges, sources said. They said some of the younger members of radical groups differed with them on their operational approach. Yaseen Ahmed, a spokesman for the Khatam-e-Nabuwwat Federation, declined to comment.

Hate literature is being distributed in various cities, and includes incitement to violence. Rauf, a young Ahmadi student from Shahdara Town, says the cleric in his local mosque has been consistently making vicious statements against the Ahmadiyya Community in his loudspeaker sermons. Rauf no longer ventures out of his house, not even to pray.

"We are being cornered," said Saleemuddin, the spokesman of the community. "They were already after the living, now they are after the dead."

Reaching out to our elders

A few years ago, I went to visit my ancestral village in northwestern India for the first time. I did not know anything about the place except that there was a huge tree in the center of the village. My grandfather and his contemporaries used to sit under the shade of the tree; it was a gathering place for the village residents. I was not even sure if the tree would still be there. The guide took us there and... lo and behold! The tree was there...complete, with even a group of people sitting under its shade talking to each other.

I have no clue as to what the people would have talked about under that tree over 80 years ago. I imagine they talked about the fields and the weather and the good ol' days. Maybe they talked about the mysteries of life and what was going on in each one's family? Since they met every day, it could not have been a long conversation. Maybe they just gathered there to admire nature and hear the leaves clapping in the afternoon breeze. One thing would have been noticeable though; the young people would also sit there and listen to their elders talk. Lack of Radio, TV, Internet, iPods and Wii did not give them many choices. That was probably a good thing.

Although most of the elderly gentlemen under the tree were not formally educated, they had a lifetime of experiences. They had acquired knowledge by studying nature and learning from their experiences both, good



and bad. This was the venue for them to pass all they had learned and experienced to the next generation. Of course, it was up to the young how they utilized the wisdom bestowed upon them.

When I go to dinner parties or other get-together occasions nowadays, I see a different picture. It does not take much time before the young folks start to remove themselves away from the old folks. In a few minutes the old folks and the young folks are separated in their own groups and it is visible. The old folks talk about their homeland and the political strife and joke around in their native mother tongue. The young folks talk about the latest in the electronic inventions and Apps they can add to their iPhones and I am sure things they don't want old guys like me to know. Come to think about it, it's probably better for our health that they keep us in the dark. God knows we already have enough stress.

I know from my own experiences that I learned a lot from the elders of our times because I sat with them along with other young people of my age. Practical solutions and advice we received from those gatherings were the guiding lights throughout our life. Young people of today are missing out on that. There is no substitute for the wisdom and guidance from an elder whose intention is just to pass the essence of life to the next generation. They have no ulterior motive or selfish reasoning to misguide the next generation. They want the next generation to do better.

I was involved in appearing in front of a county board in reference to the approval process of zoning change for a mosque project. Most of the members of the board were elderly gentlemen. Once the meeting was over, one of the board members approached me and

said that I should not worry about it because the approval will be granted. Then he stated that in his opinion if everyone lived up to be 150 years of age, the world would be much better off because the older you get, the less you want to hurt anyone.

The Holy Prophet Muhammad^{sa} said: "If a young man honors an older person on account of his age, Allah appoints someone to show reverence to him in his old age." The Holy Qur'an has emphasized the importance of being in the company of righteous people. Prophets have tried to get their disciples to spend as much time as possible with them. It was through their constant companionship and listening to the wisdom and advice *in person* that changed their outlook on life. That is how a new heaven and earth is created. Reading a book on a particular subject or to *Google* a topic cannot, and will not, do the trick. We don't even know who pasted the material on the internet that we see and proceed to quote all over the place.

The tree that I saw in our village reminded me how the tradition of people getting together after a hard day's work and exchanging ideas and experiences is still in full force with young people learning from the elder generation. We don't have those trees in the big cities we live in but we have our elders to learn from. Human history shows that one generation learned from the previous one and passed on a better and advanced philosophy and technology to the next. Let us not waste the opportunity to learn what it takes a lifetime to master.

Reach out to your elders, especially the righteous ones. I know it is hard to laugh at the jokes of the elders especially when they are in Punjabi or Pushto. But that's really a small price to pay. Believe me...it's well worth your while.

On the brighter side, it would give you a break from the hectic finger wrestling you do with your iPhone or whatever that gadget's called. You have a lifetime to play with those gadgets, but your elders may not be around for those questions that you will have wished you had asked.

Falahud Din Shams

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